

August 1932

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The Taxi Runs Amuck

Hallelujah, I'm A Bum!

The American **Mercury**

Edited by

H. L. MENCKEN

Altar Boy

John Fante

The Paris Racket

Randolph Bartlett

Life and Death of a Coal-Miner

Jack Conroy

Drug-Store in a Dry Town

Bob Brown

A Party at Mr. K. Nagoya's

Idwal Jones

Two Kinds of Country People

Walter A. Terpenning

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CHECK LIST of NEW BOOKS

BIOGRAPHY

OWEN D. YOUNG. *A New Type of Industrial Leader.*

By Ida M. Tarbell. The Macmillan Company
\$3 9 x 6; 353 pp. New York

Mr. Young is only fifty-seven years old, but for the last ten of them has been chairman of the board of the General Electric. After a close and long study of his career, Miss Tarbell emerges with a paean of praise that would probably make even an archangel whistle. She has absolutely nothing unfavorable to say about her hero, and she frankly admits that "all discoveries seem to enlarge him." Mr. Young, apparently, looks upon industry the way Abraham Lincoln looked upon government: as a mechanism "of the people, by the people, for the people." That he is a friend of labor goes without saying. Indeed, he has achieved the miracle of being in favor of both trade unions and company unions. He has a tremendous "enjoyment of human beings, . . . and he is most catholic when it comes to men," whatever that may mean. "His uniform gentleness, his consideration for the other fellow, his mastery of the principles of friendly negotiation" might plausibly lead one to think that he is "an undiluted fountain of human kindness." But that impression would be wrong, for the man really has "a very rigid backbone." Altogether, he is "highly developed mentally, emotionally, socially." Should Mr. Young ever decide to favor the American people by consenting to be nominated for the Presidency he could not wish for a better campaign biography than this one by the gifted Miss Tarbell. There are many illustrations, and also an index.

MEMOIRS OF PRINCE VON BÜLOW. 1909-1919.

Little, Brown & Company
\$5 9½ x 6; 435 pp. Boston

In this third volume of his memoirs Prince von Bülow describes the World War and Germany's collapse. "The misfortune was," he declares, "that William II, having given Bismarck his dismissal, should have been unable to discipline himself, while at the same time he set about the development of our German political system in the direction of parliamentary Liberalism. But no—the young Emperor cherished the illusions that he was fitted to be his own Chancellor, and play, before the eyes of the world, such a part as Bismarck had sustained . . . with magnificent genius. It was also a misfortune that the Emperor could never understand my intention of

iv

preparing, little by little but progressively, and without once halting or looking back, a system of parliamentary government, after the Reichstag elections of 1907, by the reform of the Prussian electoral system, and with it the appointment of deputies as ministers or secretaries of state. . . . Instead of evolution came revolution!" The volume is not nearly so interesting as the preceding ones; it is largely repetitious, and often tiresome in its recriminations. There are sixteen illustrations, a supplement containing letters and addresses received by Prince von Bülow on his retirement, and an index. Geoffrey Dunlop made the excellent translation.

LAW

THE ORIGIN & HISTORY OF HEBREW LAW.

By J. M. Powis Smith.

The University of Chicago Press
\$3 7½ x 5; 285 pp. Chicago

Dr. Smith here sweeps away all the pious nonsense that has accumulated around the so-called Mosaic code, and discusses it rationally and realistically, as other codes of law are discussed. He describes its development in detail, and with great learning. Beginning with the Decalogue, which he says was a codification, probably by the historic Moses, of a series of tribal codes, he proceeds to the Covenant Code, the Deuteronomic Code, the Holiness Code of Leviticus, Exodus and Numbers, the Code of Ezekiel, and the final Priestly Code. The book is learned and valuable. It is enriched by translations of the Code of Hammurabi, the Assyrian Code, and the Hittite Code, which last was not unearthed until 1906 and not published until 1921. These translations were all made for Dr. Smith by colleagues at the University of Chicago, where he is professor of Semitic languages and literature. He is also editor of the *Journal of Religion*.

MR. JUSTICE BRANDEIS.

Edited by Felix Frankfurter.

The Yale University Press
\$3 9½ x 6½; 232 pp. New Haven

Mr. Justice Brandeis recently celebrated his seventy-fifth birthday, and the present volume of eulogy was brought together as a tribute to his achievements as lawyer, social philosopher, and judge. The five essays are the following: "The Social Thoughts of Mr. Justice Brandeis," by Max Lerner; "Mr. Justice Brandeis and the Constitution," by Felix Frankfurter;

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CHECK LIST OF NEW BOOKS

Continued from page iv

"The Industrial Liberalism of Mr. Justice Brandeis," by Donald R. Richberg; "Mr. Justice Brandeis and the Regulation of Railroads," by Henry Wolf Bicklé; and "The Jurist's Art," by Walton H. Hamilton. There are also brief remarks by Mr. Chief Justice Hughes and Mr. Justice Holmes. At the end there is a complete list of the opinions written by Mr. Justice Brandeis as a member of the United States Supreme Court, preceded by a mass of notes.

ECONOMICS

THE THEORY OF SOCIAL ECONOMY.

By *Gustav Cassel*. *Harcourt, Brace & Company*
\$5 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{4}$; 708 pp. *New York*

Dr. Cassel is professor of economics at the University of Stockholm and a recognized authority on his subject. His two specialties are the theories of prices and interest, but he has also written a great deal on the theory of trade cycles and on international trade. The present book, which contains the major principles of his economic thinking, was first published in 1923 and was immediately translated into several languages. The first English translation appeared in 1924. The present translation by S. L. Barron is from the fifth German edition, which appeared in 1931. It is so heavily revised that it is virtually a new work. It is addressed chiefly to professional economists, and the layman will find it heavy going. Dr. Cassel still argues powerfully for "the abolition of a separate theory of value, and the direct construction of economic theory on the basis of a theory of prices." In his discussion of trade booms, he points out that they always end in crises, not because of overproduction, as some economists think, but because of "an over-estimate of the supply of capital or of the amount of savings available for taking over the real capital produced." There are several statistical tables, and an index.

AS I SEE IT.

By *Norman Thomas*. *The Macmillan Company*
\$2 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{2}$; 173 pp. *New York*

"Nothing is clearer," says Mr. Thomas, "than that laissez-faire capitalism has broken down." If we do not look out we shall "drift to catastrophe." In the domestic affairs of the United States the outstanding problem is that of unemployment. "The city is about the worst taxing agency on which to depend for emergency relief. The Federal government is the best, first, because it has power . . . to tax incomes and inheritances . . . ; and second, because the depression is nationwide and should be dealt with

on that basis." It would also help to put all commercial banks under Federal control, and compel them to belong to the Federal Reserve. As far as the world situation is concerned, all countries should recognize Russia, cancel the war debts and the reparations payments, and do all in their power to make the Geneva Conference on Disarmament a success. Ultimately what the world needs is a planned economy, but "Socialism is the essential condition of planning even as planning is the essential tool of successful Socialism." And so on. There is no index.

THE STRUCTURE OF COMPETITIVE INDUSTRY.

By *E. A. G. Robinson*. *Harcourt, Brace & Company*
\$1.25 7 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 5; 184 pp. *New York*

This book is one of the Cambridge Economic Handbooks, of which J. M. Keynes is general editor. The series "is not directed toward making original contributions to economic science. Its object is to expound its elements in a lucid, accurate, and illuminating way, so that the number of those who can begin to think for themselves may be increased." Mr. Robinson, who is lecturer in economics in the University of Cambridge, has written a volume which adheres to this purpose admirably. Among the subjects he considers are the optimum firm, the optimum managerial unit, the optimum financial unit, the effects of risks and fluctuations, the types of industrial combination, the problems of transportation, the division of labor, and rationalization. The exposition throughout is clear, and wherever possible current examples are used. There is an index.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

BANANA GOLD.

By *Carleton Beals*. *The J. B. Lippincott Company*
\$3 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 5 $\frac{3}{4}$; 367 pp. *Philadelphia*

Mr. Beals here does for Guatemala, Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua what he did for Mexico in his excellent "Mexican Maze." He has lived in and traveled through all those countries, and he knows them and their peoples as probably no other American knows them. Skillfully combining fragments of history, religion, folk-lore, contemporary politics, and personal travel experiences, he presents highly picturesque sketches of life in each of the four chief Central American Republics. Perhaps the best section in the book is that dealing with his long and arduous journey to the hiding place of Sandino in the

*Continued in back advertising section,
page x*

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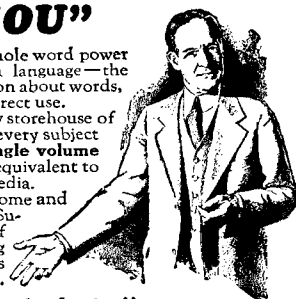
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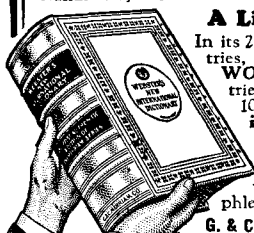
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The American MERCURY

August 1932

THE TAXI RUNS AMUCK

BY RAYMOND S. TOMPKINS

EVERY one knows that the average American taxicab driver is a natural philosopher, an incomparable wit, a student of Schopenhauer, a keen observer of nature, and perhaps a Yale divinity student or a novelist in disguise. But probably few people know that, at the present time, he is also a package of economic and political dynamite, and one of the biggest urban problems turned up since cellars became saloons.

Today when the traveling American comes out of a railroad station, steps into a taxi and says, "Hotel des Roaches, please!" great economists begin to lash their tails and growl, City Councils shiver, State Legislatures stir uneasily in their sleep, Public Service Commissions begin to look at law books, traction magnates turn pale and scream for the police, statisticians rush for charts and pencils, and Representatives in Congress plot to upset the judgments of the courts.

The reasons for the pandemonium are not quickly clear to the simple citizen. Indeed, he is probably quite unconscious of it. But occasional newspaper headlines would lead him to the truth if he had the time to follow them up. They may read,

"Taxi Control Bill May Pass", "Taxicab Men Crowd P. S. C. Hearing Room", "Cut-Rate Cabs Must Insure, He Says", or something similar. Perhaps, if he pays any attention to them at all, he thinks they have something to do with some petty local business squabble.

But the taxicab problem is really as national today as the unemployment problem, with which it is closely connected. No American city with a population of 25,000 or over is free from it. Every established taxicab company everywhere, happily equipped with big cab fleets, far-flung call systems, fat hotel and railroad stands and thick lists of regular patrons, has great holes chawed in its balance sheets by the moths of the cut-rate invasion. In every big city the operators of street railways and bus lines look at the recurring statements of their earnings with the gusto of a housewife looking into a refrigerator full of red ants. Everywhere local statesmen talk of the crying need for sane control and of the near approach of "economic limits"—and at the same time swear to protect every cab driver in the pursuit of his God-given rights.

In the cool of the evening, through city

streets thronged with people who still have work to go home from and suppers to go home to, long lines of strangely labelled automobiles crawl along ahead of the street cars—ordinary five-passenger sedans with Try-Me Cab Co. in home-painted letters on the door, or Pro-Tex-U Cab, or The Hop-In Cab Co., Inc., or just the name of the driver. In the side and rear windows paper signs are pasted, reading “ $3\frac{1}{2}$ Miles For 25 Cents; 5 Cents For Each $\frac{1}{4}$ Mile”. Or, “Anywhere in City Proper, 20 Cents”. Usually there is another sign, “No Charge for Extra Passengers”.

A trio of stenographers stops one and clambers in. Down the street they spy a girl friend and she hops in, too. Farther along another girl gets into the front seat beside the chauffeur. Five is a load, and away they go, the driver zipping across street intersections and swerving in and out of traffic to drop his passengers one or two at a time and get back downtown for another load, for he knows that he won't get more than the maximum two bits out of the whole crowd and that more than a thousand other taxis are down there grabbing passengers three and five at a time, and they are not hard to grab. Why should they be? At the rate of five for a quarter the fare is a nickel apiece—the old-time street car fare of pre-war days—and you ride in a taxi, formerly the equipage of the rich and frivolous.

When did all this business begin, and why? The taxicab used to be exclusive. Nobody used one unless he were sent home sick from the office or tight from a party, or wanted to impress a lady friend. The low, ominous tick of the meter and its inexorable piling up of heavy fixed charges gave all but the most affluent passengers the uncomfortable feeling of a sober man tossing dimes out of a window. Thus the taxi had its own special field.

Taxicabs and taxicab companies competed with one another after a fashion, but usually a hinterland city had no more than two or three companies, with fairly uniform rates and their own clientèles; and it was only in New York that visitors were astonished at the variety of colors, shapes and ages of the cabs and the sales-ferocity of the cabmen.

There was no public regulation then. Taxicabs were not regarded as public utilities in the same sense as street railway or gas and electric companies. Anybody could run one. The public did not have to be “protected” against any “taxi barons”, since taxis were neither necessities nor monopolies, and so there were no franchises and no barons. If there were an accident and you were hurt, the company was usually substantial enough to settle at once, or to pay a judgment later.

The change seems to have crept upon us imperceptibly, and has only become the subject of clamor within the past year or so. The combination of the Depression and cheap passenger automobiles made it possible. If a man out of work had a car and couldn't get a job there was no reason why he shouldn't pick up a little change hauling his friends and neighbors. Usually all he needed was an inexpensive city license. At rates a little lower than those of the old-line taxi companies, he could get a little business away from them. If this began to be alarming to the old companies they would reduce their rates. Thus the first real rate wars began.

The overproduction of cheap passenger automobiles began to alarm the manufacturers at about the same time armies of workers began trooping out of business and industry on enforced and indefinite vacations. Nothing seemed more natural than that the cheap unsold automobiles and the growing army of the jobless

should be brought together. Gentlemen to whom this simple and brilliant idea occurred in the middle of the night leaped out of bed and began organizing new taxicab companies. The supply of candidates for chauffeurs' jobs seemed inexhaustible. Shiny new automobiles of cheap make could be bought in large lots at discounts from the regular retail price.

But soon fierce rate wars began to imperil the first profits. Like society widows going into the tea-room business, the débutant taxicab magnates seemed to think profits were what you took in, and expenses were just bills you paid if you had the money. If they had ever heard of a depreciation reserve they seem to have thought it was just a trade term used by correspondence-school bookkeepers. So long as a cab would run it would earn money. When it wore out they would get a new one. Of course, this was the gospel of bankruptcy, and there were plenty of bankruptcies, with the automobile manufacturer taking the loss. But there were so many other automobile manufacturers with flocks of new cars that wouldn't sell that this was a minor detail to the cab operator. He simply moved to the next town and started in again, dealing this time with another manufacturer.

II

Soon, however, another idea came forth like the sun flaming out at midnight, a truly Napoleonic conception. This noble inspiration, which prevented disaster—for the promoter—completely revolutionized the taxicab business, and is giving railway operators and pallid utility investors that tight feeling around the collar, was the idea of renting the cab to the driver and collecting the rent each morning before he took out the cab, thus leaving the bag, as

it is called, neatly deposited in his hands. Everything he made over and above his rent—if he made anything—belonged to him. The rent, of course, belonged to the company free and clear. Since the driver was now a lessee, he was no longer an employé; hence the company was not responsible for his acts. He could tear off a passenger's ear against a telegraph pole and no action for damages lay against the company. It sold him his gasoline and oil, and repaired his cab—at his expense.

Like all great business inspirations, the new idea spread quickly from city to city. Apple-selling was beginning to be a tough racket and this new one looked easier and more profitable. So the wild-catter came back to the urban transportation industry for the first time since the jitney days just after the World War. This, indeed, was worse than the ancient jitney, for the jitney was a bus, often little more than a large chicken crate on wheels, that ran on a route more or less fixed, while the taxi route followed the passenger's slightest whim—an automobile ride on plush upholstery at a jitney price.

By January last there were said to be 150,000 taxicabs running around the streets of American cities. Of these, 84,000 belonged to companies that had been in business before the gold rush began. In 1931 they had carried 378,000,000 passengers, more than a million a day, and their gross revenues amounted to \$252,000,000. The other 66,000 taxis were the wild-catters or carpet-baggers, carrying nearly as many more passengers and grossing almost as much money.

Seattle has a municipally-owned street railway, but that made no difference to the cut-rate taxi boys. At the height of the rate war there, the trolley system, owned and operated by the taxpayers, was losing about \$800 a day in revenue. In Baltimore,

a much bigger city, the street car company was dropping from \$1,500 to \$4,000 a day. In Washington, our peerless leaders in the government were so delighted with the new deal that they helped the taxi men take from the two street car companies a total of about \$100,000 a month. They had already, in 1930, deserted the two established old-line taxi concerns to the tune of about \$500,000 in revenue for the year; and as this is written the luckless old-line operators have not finished figuring up their losses for the first half of 1932.

Indeed, the Capital City, model for the country in scenery, architecture, boulevards and pay-rolls, furnishes likewise a model for the modern story of the cheap taxicab invasion. Until early in 1930, about 600 taxicabs could carry all the new Congressmen who never had ridden in one before, and still give plenty of necessary general service. Before the end of 1931, Washington had 4,000 taxicabs, or seven and a half cabs for each Senator and Representative in Congress. The old Washington taxi fares had been, generally, fifteen cents for the first quarter mile and five cents for each additional quarter. The first of the cheap cabs, appearing early in 1931, introduced the zone system. Dividing the city into four zones, the earliest fares were thirty-five cents, sixty cents, eighty-five cents and \$1.10. This was considerably cheaper than the old quarter-mile rate by meter, but the zones were poorly defined. As a matter of fact, nearly every Washington driver fixed his own zones. Many riders, thinking they were making a 35-cent trip, found themselves really making 60-cent or 85-cent trips. But since there was no court or commission to appeal to, nothing could be done about it.

In July, 1931, with taxis multiplying like guinea pigs on Washington's broad avenues, the four zone rates were hammered

down to twenty, forty, sixty and eighty cents, with no charge for extra passengers. It was thus cheaper for the government clerks and everybody else to ride to and from work in taxis than to use the street cars, whose fares were ten cents flat, with four tokens for thirty cents, and special cheap school fares.

So taxicab driving in Washington became a sort of craze, like backgammon. Government clerks took it up, turning out at 6:30 in the morning to drive until time to take up the business of the nation at 9 o'clock; and then at 4:30 P.M. leaping from swivel chair to taxi wheel and piloting fares around until supper time. To men without jobs the new taxi era looked like salvation, and the promoters bought newspaper space lavishly to help along the impression, proclaiming, "Our men make \$50 to \$60 a week; Don't miss this opportunity; Call today and ask for our Mr. Jones". Here, instead of renting the cab, the driver was offered the chance to buy it. His \$4 a day to the promoter was a daily instalment on the purchase price, and the company sold him his gas, oil and repair service, furnished a system of telephone call-boxes, and at the end of a year gave him the car, or what was left of it.

From the standpoint of the promoters and automobile manufacturers, it was a great plan, and it quickly spread to other cities. The unit cost of the cars in large lots to the promoter was \$670. For 100 of them he would pay \$67,000, and in a year, at the rate of \$4 a day, he would get \$146,000 for them, plus the income from gas, oil, tires and servicing charges. His operating expenses did not increase in proportion to the number of his cabs and drivers because there were hardly any operating expenses at all. Such as they were, they were borne by the drivers.

Another scheme, almost as popular as

the Washington Plan, involved a three-cornered arrangement between a company, a number of voluntary agents and the drivers. The company would adopt an attractive name like Serve-U Taxi Corp., acquire a garage, a telephone system with call-boxes, and a repair shop, but with no cabs. To it could come a citizen with a little capital: he owned, say, five new automobiles purchased at a unit cost of about \$600, with a down payment of \$200 on each car. To buy them had involved a capital outlay of \$1,000, and an agreement to meet regular monthly payments for the balance. Anybody with this \$1,000 could then turn his five new cars over to the Serve-U Taxi Corp., which would agree to pay him \$3 per car per 12-hour day. Since the cabs were operated in two 12-hour shifts, this meant earnings for him of \$30 every twenty-four hours on the five cars. All the \$1,000 capitalist had to do was call at the operating company's headquarters twice every twenty-four hours and collect \$15 each time. The \$3 he got for each cab was paid by the driver before taking it out on his shift. All the money the driver took in over and above the \$3 belonged to him, but out of it he had to pay the Serve-U for gasoline and repairs. This was the Serve-U's source of income, plus \$1 per cab per day paid by the capitalist for use of the company's call-box system, garage space and general services. Under this plan everybody's income was fixed and certain except that of the driver, whose earnings depended upon how much he hustled.

The beauty of the scheme was that it virtually assured profits to at least two parties to the tri-partite agreement, without any accompanying responsibility. In case of damage or other claims, the Serve-U could not be sued because it did not own the cabs, the capitalist could not be sued because the driver was not his agent, and no

judgment would be collectable from the driver because he had nothing on which to levy.

New York, before the recent start of its Taxi Control Board, created by Mayor Walker and made famous by the Hofstadter Committee and Samuel Seabury, was the birthplace of innumerable Taxi Owners' Associations. These were groups of individual drivers, brought together by organizers who collected dues, conducted membership drives, and held rousing meetings in which everybody was urged to stick together "for the good of the industry", and do business in gentlemanly fashion and on a "coöperative" basis. One such organization, with a \$5 initiation fee and dues of \$1 a month, boasted 2,000 members. But some outlaw was always muscling into the profession and kicking coöperation in the pants with a cut rate or some ungentlemanly stunt like kidnaping passengers from colleagues and bundling them off bodily in his cab. So in spite of the efforts of the organizers to limit the meetings to orderly affairs in pool parlors and hotels, street corner conferences multiplied amongst the taxi men of New York, and differences were settled with fists, rocks and clubs. The Bronx became famous for these affairs of honor. In one of them the peacemaker was knocked down with a brick while another driver jumped into a cab and drove over his body.

III

The hotly competitive nature of the business made it difficult to promote peace and love amongst drivers, and old war maneuvers like the closed line, for example, were quickly learned by the recruits and diligently practiced. In a closed line three cabmen conspire against a common enemy. At the cab stand, when the enemy gets into

position to take a call, one of the conspirators pulls directly in front of him. The second gets close in behind him, and the third pulls up on the outside. He is thus neatly wedged, and has no recourse except to try to drive on to the sidewalk or to jump out and fight all three allies.

The jobless white-collar men who took up taxi driving soon found out that only a pretty strong fellow could stand up under that kind of competition. A driver might knock out from \$1 to \$3 a day above the cost of taking out his cab, but usually he had to drive twelve or fourteen hours a day to do it. Also, a new class of taxi customers had sprung up, not free spenders like the old taxi riders. The new taxi rider had become one because he was a person with a keen eye for a bargain. Attracted by the sudden and fascinating cheapness of the new means of transportation, upon which he had always thought only drunks and millionaires frittered away their money, he would no more tip a driver than he would tip a bargain basement saleslady. Instead of tipping, he was more likely to argue about the zone. Or, if he lived a little way outside the first zone, he would get out at the boundary, pay off the driver and walk the rest of the way. Tips, if any, averaged a nickel.

There were also more of the kind of riders who would jump out of the cab and run at the end of the ride. Scarcely a day's issue of a newspaper passed without a brief account of the arrest of some thrifty citizen for refusing to pay a 35-cent fare. Rather than pay fifty cents or more, plenty of them would try to beat up a driver. "Pays Cab Fare In Court; Get Suspended Sentences", became a standing headline in newspaper composing-rooms from New York to San Francisco. In New York a 20-cent passenger once demanded \$4.80 change for a \$1 bill.

The fact is, of course, that the taxi men were getting old street car habitués as their passengers, and the street car habitué has had long practice fighting for his money's worth. It was not at all unusual in Washington for a driver to pick up a Senator at the Shoreham Hotel, say, drive him to Capitol Hill, call him by name and talk to him pleasantly all the way about the tariff and the deficit, and collect two thin dimes at the door of the Senate Office Building. Sometimes a driver got no more than twenty cents for seven miles. The prize-winning ride in Washington for twenty cents took the driver on a call from Union Station to an address in Southwest Washington, where he picked up a woman with a baby, drove them out to the 1400 block of North Carolina avenue, and came back to the station—a total of fifteen miles.

Under this sort of punishment the old-time drivers, once fat and comfortable in a profession that had produced literary men and realtors, grew lean and gaunt. To the swarms of newcomers it was a little better than no job at all, but only a little. Rates went down and down, for there were so many cabs that a man had to take passengers for almost nothing in order to get any at all. A fleet of nickel cabs appeared in the Capital—lovely lavender sedans that would take you aboard for a nickel and stop for other riders at the same rate until the cab was full. Then the free cab actually arrived. Your use of it involved no charge whatever, but merely a gentleman's agreement that you would tip the driver.

In Galveston a Ten-Cent Taxi Service sprang up, shut down during a stormy public controversy, then, early this Spring, resumed operations. In Shreveport, La., 1,500 voters signed a petition to retain ten-cent taxis. Unemployed men in Amarillo, Tex., inaugurated a cab service that advertised, "any part of the city for a dime". In

Tulsa, Okla., a cab company introduced a ten, fifteen and twenty-cent zone rate. In the Bronx, several groups of operators introduced a club plan of selling taxi rides, sending out cards to neighborhood people entitling them to reductions of 20% on all rides running to more than fifty cents. In Seattle with the municipal street railway losing \$800 a day to the cheap taxis, the City Council was asked to authorize a reduction in rates from twenty-five cents for the first quarter mile to twenty-five cents for the first mile. An influx of ten-cent taxis in Wichita, Kansas, produced \$2,000 in city licenses. Cleveland had a rate of five cents for each third of a mile. Cincinnati, Boston, Baltimore, Chicago, New York, Portland, Oregon; Fort Wayne, Indiana, all were the scenes of bitter rate wars.

The job of running a cut-rate taxi with any chance of profit whatever involved jumping quickly from one passenger to another, quick starts and stops, and brilliant broken-field running in crowded streets. The need for a swift getaway from the customer gave New York counterfeiters the astute idea of shoving bad money on to the drivers, and hundreds of fake \$1 bills got into circulation because of their need for haste in making change and moving out of traffic.

Naturally, too, smashups increased at an alarming rate. In New York 20% of all traffic accidents were the fault of taxicabs in 1931, according to the annual report of the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, yet taxicabs represented only 2% of the State's registered cars. Taxicab spokesmen pointed out that they ran more miles than private cars, and that there were few crashes a mile, but the mounting accident totals looked appalling to the innocent bystanders. A prominent Park avenue lawyer suffered a broken neck in a taxicab. The

driver picked him up at a club, dashed away, soon heard a thump on the floor, and found his passenger suffering from a fracture of the fifth cervical vertebra. In Baltimore taxicab accidents jumped 140% in the first three months of 1932. One company alone had eighty-four accidents in eighty-four days, three of them fatal. For no clear reason Baltimore's taxicab accident record is one of the worst in the United States. Figures submitted by an insurance company there at a recent hearing before the State Insurance Commissioner of Maryland showed that Baltimore taxicabs had an average of four accidents per cab per *annum*, while New York had two and a half accidents per cab, Boston two, and Chicago one and a half.

IV

Until 1929, the idea of treating a taxicab company as a public utility was virtually unheard of, for public utility regulation is regarded in this country as a sort of ball and chain on a monster to keep him from eating defenseless people, and nobody had been defenseless against taxicabs. You used them if you could afford them; if not, they didn't concern you. But when the business began assuming its present monstrous proportions, loud and violent demands went up for an end to the turmoil. Naturally these demands came, not from the public, which was interested merely in the fascinating fact that the "free" or the five-cent taxi had actually arrived. They came from the established transportation interests with large investments in public service equipment and facilities, whose patrons were deserting them.

For a noble and highly respectable adventure in public protection, taxi regulation in New York City seems to have had drab beginnings. Its birth was attended

by carefully dressed gentlemen from Wall Street with envelopes full of gilt-edged bonds in their pockets, and by the sort of practical midwifery understood by other gentlemen in politics. As Mr. J. A. Sisto, of J. A. Sisto & Company, told Seabury, J., before the Hofstadter Committee, "My conversation with the Mayor was in connection with newspaper accounts about some racketeers getting into the taxicab situation and disrupting our investment; wanting to cut some rates down to five cents a mile or two cents a mile. I asked him if there wasn't some redress against those types of people going into an industry and protecting a large investment which the taxicab owners had in the business."

Mayor Walker's heart seems to have been touched, for the Board of Taxicab Control was established in New York in March of this year, with as complete power over taxicabs as any State Public Service Commission has over a gas and electric company. By this time it was estimated that 13,100 taxicabs were on the New York streets—one cab for every 528 persons, but the annual takings were said to have shrunk from \$120,000,000 in 1930 to \$45,000,000 in 1931. While the big cab companies applauded the creation of the Control Board, the thousands of independent drivers viewed it with alarm, for they were sure it was created to crush them, and they fought it. But everybody joined in a big welcome luncheon to the new chairman of the board, with speeches about mutual confidence, bright hopes for the future and a square deal for all.

While nearly everybody agreed that there were too many taxis on the New York streets, the Control Board chairman magnanimously inaugurated control by relicensing every cab driver in town. But the following week the board knocked off

fifty cabs at one crack by outlawing a racket that seems to have been just a customary practice. A company, having bought fifty cabs from one manufacturer, couldn't meet the payments, and listened to the manufacturer's suggestion that it take fifty more, and so make more money. When this bright prophecy blew up and the manufacturer began to get tough, the cab company arranged to buy fifty cabs from another manufacturer and let the first manufacturer have his old cabs back. But this involved transferring the license plates from the first set of cabs to the second set. At this point the mistreated manufacturer came roaring to the Control Board, which adjudged the cab operator's ingenious scheme incompatible with "the new found sense of security of the taxicab industry".

Nowhere was regulation more hotly fought than in Washington. In the District of Columbia, before the Public Utilities Commission, the independent cabmen first fought against the taximeter. But the commission was quickly convinced that sanity would return in the taxi world only when the zone system and its twin, the driver-rental system, were replaced by honest meters and regularly employed chauffeurs, so it ordered meters on all the cabs, and the cab drivers went to court. The court upheld the order, whereupon the drivers invoked the aid of the Congress of the United States, which had just appropriated \$101,000 for the maintenance of the Public Utilities Commission, and had plenty of time to take up taxi problems. Led by the fiery Blanton of Texas, a sturdy group of patriots in the House declared they would die fighting for the twenty-cent zone, and denounced the meter menace as un-American, and an invention of the ex-Kaiser; and declared it made slaves of free-born taxi drivers. The House was aroused, but it couldn't overrule the District of Co-

lumbia Supreme Court. A last minute inspiration saved the country from dishonor. The House simply tacked an amendment on to the Utilities Commission appropriation bill, providing that no part of the money should be used for publishing or issuing the commission's meter order!

In Maryland one of the biggest and most industrious lobbies that ever pestered a Maryland Legislature fought a taxicab regulation bill introduced at the last session. But the bill was backed by the State Public Service Commission and was passed. Whereupon the pioneer Baltimore zone-cab company invoked a referendum law and undertook to get 10,000 signatures to a petition to submit the new law to the voters in 1932. The petitions were formally presented and the Secretary of State held them legally sufficient to have the law put on the ballot. But then an old-line taxi company began checking the signatures. It found names of dead persons, names of dogs, names of people who had not signed the petition at all. A Negro locked up in a county jail had earned some spare change filling in all the names he could think of. One set of petitions had been left in several speakeasies for all comers to sign. Another bore names taken from rural mailboxes along a county route. So the court enjoined the State official from putting the law on the ballot and it became effective at once, but only in Baltimore. The taxi lobby had succeeded in exempting from its provisions all Maryland cities with populations of less than 50,000, which left the field wide open in towns like Cumberland, Hagerstown and Frederick.

Today taxis have State utility regulation in ten States and the District of Columbia, and city regulation of some sort in about ninety cities of 25,000 people or more, according to a recent study by the American Electric Railway Association. But the

war over rates continues from coast to coast, and where regulation has been adopted battles rage over what to regulate. All regulatory bodies with any power at all agree that liability insurance or indemnity bonds are necessary for the protection of passengers, but even this principle has been fought by the zone-cab men and promoters, who argue that insurance premiums are a hardship on the drivers, which is true, considering what the drivers make.

When the principle is established the fight spreads to the insurance companies, which then start battling for customers. A city with 1,000 or more new taxicabs, all forced to take out insurance before a certain date, offers a rich field for the insurance men, and they flock to it like miners to a gold strike, cutting rates, offering rebates—anything to get the business. Then the accident claims begin to roll in. At least one insurance company has gone broke in New York writing taxicab insurance. Insurance commission reports in another Eastern city show that between January 1 and March 31 of this year, one company had a loss on public liability policies of 108½% of the premiums it paid, while on property damage its loss amounted to 111.8%. All the insurance men agree that this cannot go on; but no one wants to be the first to stop the present practice of writing taxicab policies with annual premiums of around \$360 for \$5,000 insurance on any one person injured, and \$10,000 for two or more persons hurt in any one accident. One solution is to boost the premiums, but this might also mean boosting taxi fares and no one seems to want to pioneer in this, either, although the suffering taxi men themselves itch to begin it.

There is yet no general agreement in the country about any phase of taxi regulation. The questions chiefly at issue are whether

to require certificates of public convenience and necessity, whether taximeters or zone rates shall control the fares, whether fares shall be controlled at all, whether cruising shall be permitted or taxicab stands provided, and whether the driver-rental system shall be countenanced. In Indianapolis, where the authorities agree that cruising is a nuisance, the chief of police has suggested letting taxis park around all the city's fire plugs. This has raised a great hullabaloo.

The chief thinks that it would not handicap the firemen like ordinary parking, because taximen are always seated in their cabs, ready to spring away from the plugs at the first clang of the engine. In Cleveland a special council committee has been urging a raise in the rate of five cents for each third of a mile. In Baltimore, despite complete regulatory authority, rates are not regulated at all, and convenience and necessity are not considered. Any man with a cab, a meter, insurance and the price can get a license.

Only eight cities have thought it worth while to prohibit the use of any but built-for-the-purpose taxicabs. In all others a taxicab can be virtually anything on four wheels. Authentic taxis are required in Chicago, but not in New York, Philadelphia or Detroit. Cruising for passengers is prohibited in Cleveland, St. Louis and Boston, but not in Baltimore and Pittsburgh. In San Francisco and Minneapolis a taxi driver must satisfy the authorities that he is fit to drive a taxi and financially responsible, but he needs neither fitness nor responsibility in Buffalo or Washington, and in the latter city he need not even take out any public liability insurance.

Clearly the country is taxi-dizzy as well as broke, and how long the malady will last no expert can foretell. Probably it will end when the House of Representatives turns from the local Washington problem and takes up the matter on a nation-wide scale, led by the fiery Blanton of Texas, arch-foe of the meter menace and friend of the two-dime zone.

ALTAR BOY

BY JOHN FANTE

ONE time I served Mass with Allie Saler, and Allie had the right side to serve. I mean he had to give the priest wine and ring the bells and move the missal and pretty near all the important things that altar boys do. All of us guys on the altar boys used to like serving on the right side on account of it was so important. It is a lot more important than the left side server. He hardly ever does anything. All he does is genuflect and hold the paten at Holy Communion.

We got to the sacristy about ten minutes before Mass started, and when it came time to figure out who got the right side, I said I did, and he said he did. We started in saying dirty things back and forth, and Father Andrew came in.

He said: "Here, here, what is going on here?"

We told him.

He said: "Oh, that is nothing. I will settle it by having Allie take it this morning."

I just hated that look on Allie's face. It was just like he had it all figured out with Father Andrew that I was going to get the left, and Father looked straight at Allie, just like I was not there, and it was just like saying: "I like you better than him, and your father owns the drug-store, and his father never does come to church, so that is why you get the right."

It says in the Catechism that to think evil things is the same as doing them, so right away I knew I was sinning to beat

the band while I was standing there, and I knew my sins were awful ones, maybe mortal sins, because I was standing there wishing Father Andrew was a man instead of a priest, and more my size, so I could knock the hell out of him, and get even. I was not wishing any such thing as that on Allie because it was a waste of wishes. I knew I would lay into him good and hard after Mass. He knew it too. I could tell, all right.

But it was all settled that he got the right side, so we started to get things ready for Mass. Father put on his vestments. Allie lit the candles and got the wine and water ready.

The wine was not real wine at all. My father has swell red stuff in his cellar, but this was blackish red grape juice, kind of bitter, and just as thick as ink. The guys used to swipe a mouthful every once in a while and pretend they were stewed, but I did not because it did not taste so good, and my father says you can down a whole barrel of it without it fazing you. Father Andrew likes his wine plain, without mixing it with water, and about an inch of it for every Mass. I mean the wine would be an inch deep in the pitcher.

While I was fixing the wine, all of a sudden I got a hunch on how to get even. It did not make much difference then about another sin, the sin of getting even, because I had already committed a mortal sin when I wished evil to a priest. One mortal sin is just as bad as twenty. I mean

if you commit one, you go to Hell just as quick as if you had twenty against you. It says so in the Catechism. I knew there was a bottle of red ink in the supply drawer, so I went there and got it. Nobody was looking, and I poured it into the wine bottle, about one-fifth, then I filled the rest with grape juice.

Mass started, and while I was kneeling at the altar I got to thinking about what I did. Father Andrew was moving softly back and forth on the altar, saying prayers in Latin, with his eyes shut, and I could see how holy he looked. The organ was playing sad, sacred music. Then it came to me all at once what I did. I committed a horrid sin because the ink I put in the bottle would be consecrated and changed into the body and blood of our Lord. I felt terrible to think that Jesus had been crucified for my sins, and there I was, kneeling at this sacrifice without even feeling ashamed.

Gosh, I was scared to death. I did not know what to do next. I could see how ungrateful I was to our Lord. I could see Him up in Heaven, with blood oozing out of His feet, and crying tears of blood for what I did. I kept saying over and over: "Sweet Jesus, forgive me! Sweet Jesus, forgive me! Sweet Jesus, forgive me!" I knew I deserved to burn forever for my sin, but I kept on begging our Lord for forgiveness anyhow, because it says in the Catechism that true contrition is sufficient for salvation, and I wanted to prove how really sad I was for my sin.

At the Consecration Allie gave Father the wine, and he gobbled it up without so much as blinking, so I guess he did not catch on. But all this time, there I was kneeling on the green carpet that covers the altar steps, and praying to beat the band for our Lord to forgive me. I prayed for all I was worth, trying to feel perfect

contrition. Perfect contrition is just as good as confession if you can't go to confession. If you get a tough grip on yourself, hold yourself real stiff, and think nothing but sorrow, sorrow, sorrow, pretty soon you do have real sorrow, and that is what I was wanting.

After Mass I made another Act of Contrition and said some Hail Marys to boot. Then I went into the sacristy, and Father Andrew smiled at me, because he likes to see holy guys, and when he smiled, his teeth were red like he had been eating cherries. I did not laugh or anything when I saw his red teeth. I was really scared, and if I did not know it was ink I would have sworn it was our Lord's blood. Miracles like that happen every now and then.

Father patted my shoulder, and I went around to the other side of the church and took off my cassock and surplice. Allie Saler was gone already. I hurried and ran outside and saw him a block away. The snow was starting to melt, getting ready for Spring, and Allie went along kicking up slush.

I ran up to him, put my hand on his chest and my right leg back of his knees, and pushed him, jiu-jitsu fashion. The trick worked swell. Allie sat down in the wettest, muddiest slush. That is how I got even with him. Nobody knew about the red ink except Father Joseph. I told him in confession. For penance, he made me promise not to do it again, and I did, and to say five Our Fathers and five Hail Marys. So all in all, I got off pretty easy.

II

On the first of May, because May is the month of our Mother, and by that I mean the Blessed Virgin, everybody in the altar boys had to line up two at a time in a great big long line and go to the Blessed

Virgin's altar in the church to say the rosary. We went in with our partners and knelt down in the aisle, and Harold Maguire, who was president of the altar boys, began to say the rosary out loud. I mean like this. Here is what he said, "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus." He stopped there, and the rest of us guys took it up, only we prayed like this: "Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

Worms Kelley was my partner. Worms hated Maguire like the dickens, and so did everybody else, but Worms hated him most because Maguire was a snitch baby, and he had a suck with the nuns. What I mean by suck is that when Maguire wanted something off the nuns, like going to the washroom every few minutes, he got to go, and nobody else did, except maybe two or three girls with sucks, too. I did not like Maguire to look at. He was sissified, with thick eye-glasses made out of black celluloid. His hands were little bitty things. He used to stay on the steps at noon with his "Bible Stories," so Sister Prefect could see him. He carried his lunch in a blue bucket, and the sandwiches were wrapped in the white tissue paper that you buy, instead of good old bread wrapper. His dessert every day was a big apple, or cake or pie or something like that. His mother came for him after school in a Studebaker. She was very tall, and looked like she had strong muscles. She was president of the Ladies' Altar Society, and when she came after Harold she would lean out of the car door and talk awful courteous to Sister Marie, who was upstairs looking out the window, keeping an eye on us guys so we would not break ranks. Mrs. Maguire used to lick Harold with a piece of garden hose, two feet long.

Harold got going good on the rosary and everything was all right when all of a sudden Worms started to make noises with his mouth. Sister Cecilia was in the first pew. She did not look up right away, but every one of the guys except Harold kept turning around, looking straight at Worms and me because we were kneeling close together. We were all snickering to beat the band, so Worms got nervier and nervier. He made noises louder and louder. Sister Cecilia moved a little, like she was itching all over, so Worms stopped the noises. I was glad because Worms was my partner, and I might get the blame.

We got to the Fifth Joyful Mystery, that is the last part of the rosary, when for no good reason Worms made a noise that was the funniest yet. You could hear it echo away up behind the organ-pipes. All of us except Maguire sat back on our heels and just busted out laughing. Maguire turned around to Sister like he was asking for help. It was awful. I wanted to stop laughing because it is a grievous sin to be disrespectful in church, but I could not, I just could not. I laughed and laughed, and so did Worms, and so did everybody else.

Sister Cecilia was redder than a beet. She put up her hand for silence, the way Mussolini does in *Pathé News*.

She said: "No one leaves this church until I find the pig who did that."

Nobody said anything. We were just as quiet as can be.

"Very well," she said. "You'll stay until I find out."

We had to kneel up straight and it got pretty tough on the knees. Away back in the vestibule you could hear a clock ticking. After a half hour the ticking sounded like heavy rocks hitting a slate roof. The guys started to look at Worms as if to tell him to go ahead and admit it, but the longer he kept still the worse it got, until

finally he did not dare to talk. Then old Maguire turned around and saw all the guys looking at us, and after a minute he got up and went to where Sister was. He was snitching, that is what he was doing. It was as plain as day.

We started to hiss: "Snitch baby! Snitch baby! Snitch baby!" And Maguire was sure in for a wallop from us guys.

Sister looked straight at me and Worms, and said: "Will you please follow me into the sacristy?"

I nearly keeled over. I held my breath and blinked my eyes and wondered what the heck. The only thing to do was to take it on the cheek for Worms. The guys whispered: "That's the boy!" and that was pretty good to hear, but it did not help much. I knew I was in for it. I gave Maguire a dirty look when I went by, and I bet he knew I was going to ruin him when I got him alone, because I sure was. Sister Cecilia was ready for me.

I was holding a rosary, fooling with it, standing in front of Sister Cecilia, waiting for her to do what she was going to do.

"Put the rosary away," she said. I did it.

She rolled up her black sleeves, sort of got her distance, made a moaning sound, and with all her might she let me have one smack on the cheek. The sting was something fierce and I started crying a little, but not much. The guys must have heard the smack, because it sounded just like when a cottonwood cracks and falls. I felt awful cheap. My cheek was very hot. I rubbed it. Sister Cecilia was crying too, and I thought she was sure nuts, because I was getting hit, not her. But I felt sorry for her and I did not know why, either.

She said: "Go back and kneel down, you little heathen. I'll see you later."

The guys saw my face, which was very red. It made me feel very cheap. I gave Maguire another dirty look. He was going

to get it. The guys would get him tomorrow. Me and the guys would. We could not get him after rosary because his mother would be there in her Studebaker to take the sissy home.

All the guys went home, and of course I had to go to our room, and of course I had to write "I must not be disrespectful in church" five hundred times. I did not get through until seven o'clock. After the sun went behind the peaks, and there was no light except the street lamps, I turned on the lights in the room. All by myself, I was scared and lonesome. When I got through, I put the papers on Sister's desk and went home.

My old man was waiting when I got there. I should say he was waiting. He knew all about it. Sister Cecilia had snitched, just like Maguire. My father made a run for me as soon as I got in the house. What he did to me was more than what Sister did to me, but I did not cry or anything. I took it like a real guy. The reason is, I knew he was my father, and he would stop hitting before he hurt me too serious. He kept saying he was going to kill me, but he is my father, and he does not scare me with that stuff.

Next day at school the altar boys got out at noon so we could go up to the foothills to pick flowers for the Blessed Virgin's altar. The main reason I pray to the Blessed Virgin is because we get out of a lot of school on account of her. We started out in a bunch, two at a time, and had to walk clear through town, with Sister Cecilia leading us like we were a bunch of convicts or something. Like we were dangerous. I do not like it at all. The Protestants stop every time to look at us as if we are freaks. And the Sisters look funny with their funny dresses.

We walked clear through town to the edge of the foothills. They were full of

yellow anemones and wild daisies and violets. Anemones and daisies are easy to pick. Violets smell swell, but they are the nuts to pick. It takes a whole bushel to make a bouquet.

We broke ranks and my partner Worms showed me a brand new package of Camels. Worms smoked all the time. He even inhaled. Sister Cecilia went looking for flowers, and me and Worms sneaked behind some sagebrush and crawled on our hands and knees into a gulch that used to be a creek. We lit up and took it easy.

Pretty soon we finished our snipes and crawled out of the gulch. We saw the guys scattered all over the hills. They were very far away from us. Some of them were in bunches, some were alone, carrying armloads of flowers. We could barely see who they were, they were so far off. We could see Sister Cecilia in black and white. She was walking cross-wise from us, and taking it easy. The day was awfully pretty and calm. There was not a cloud or a breeze, and it was warm. Me and Worms wanted to go fishing.

All at once, who should walk into us from behind the sagebrush? No one else but Harold Maguire. He was carrying flowers in his cap. He was so surprised he was scared to death. We were surprised too, but we were not scared. We were just surprised.

This was our chance to get even, and we knew it, and so did he. It was just like our Lord had planned it out for him to meet us. But I do not know if our Lord had planned it out for us to get even, because that is a grievous sin. I do not think our Lord had anything to do with that. I guess that was the Devil.

"Let's ding-bump him," Worms said.

"Let's," I said.

It takes two to ding-bump a man. You get him on his back, and one of you grab

his arms, and the other his legs, and you lift him up and down as hard as you can, so that his seat bumps the ground.

Harold was so scared he did not fight back. We told him to get on his back, and he did it. We told him to take off his specs, and he did it. We told him we would teach him not to snitch, and he said he would not any more. He started to cry. That made me want to hurry up.

After we bumped him the first time, he yelled as loud as he could. The guys and Sister heard him, because they came running from everywhere. It is too bad the guys were not closer. They would of got a big kick out of it. Sister Cecilia was nearly running. She was almost half a mile away.

I saw a cactus plant with short thorns, not even half an inch long.

"Let's sit him in that, and then beat it," I said.

We did it. We sat him in the cactus and ran away.

They nearly kicked us out of school for what we did. I mean the nuns.

We had to apologize to them and to Father Andrew and to the whole school. We got lickings at home and in school. We had to stay every night until five for a month. We did not get to go to the altar boy banquet.

But we did not care a bit. We got even. You can ask any of the guys about Harold Maguire now. They will tell you he used to be a snitch baby, but he is not one now. He is a swell guy now.

III

Bill Shafer is the worst altar boy in the bunch. He swipes stuff, and he chews gum before Communion. I do not see how he does it. I do not think his mother cares because I saw him eat meat on Friday. It

was a sandwich. His mother makes his lunch. If she cared, she would make him eat fish. Bill says it is not his sin if he eats meat. It is her sin. She put it in. Bill has four Sunday suits. He wears them to school a lot. His mother is sure keen looking. If my mother was as keen looking as she is, I would sure feel good. I do not mean that my mother is not good looking. I mean that Bill's mother is sure good looking.

Bill showed me how to swipe agates at the ten-cent store. You open your waist, and then you lean away over the counter. When the girl is not looking, you roll the miggs into your waist. It is a good way. It works every time. I do not think Bill told his in confession, but I told Father Andrew mine.

Father Andrew said I had to return the miggs or pay for them. He sure was sore. He almost hollered at me. Bill won all my miggs, so I will have to pay for them with money sometime. I will do it when I get bigger. I bet Bill never does pay for his.

One time I was walking home from school with Bill. He had a dime, so we went to Drake's to get Eskimo pies.

When we were in there, he said: "Hey, do you want a fountain-pen?"

I said: "Sure."

He said: "Wait a minute."

He said to Mr. Drake: "Hey Mr. Drake, can I use your 'phone?"

Mr. Drake said: "Sure."

So Bill went to the 'phone in back. At first I wondered what the heck. Then I knew he was going to swipe a pen for me. I did not snitch though, I am not a snitch baby. I did not watch, because Old Man Drake might catch on. He was piling Eskimo pies, and I looked at his bald head. His neck was real little. I started to think maybe somebody would come into the store. Maybe somebody would, then we

would get caught and get sent to Golden. The big reform school is in Golden. Sister says there is not a Catholic boy in there. There never has been. If we were caught, we would be the first Catholics. I did not want to get caught. I thought I better pray that we would not get caught.

I looked at old Drake's bald head and prayed to myself. In my head, I mean.

I said: "Hail Mary, please do not let anybody come in. Please do not let anybody come in."

The Blessed Virgin heard my prayer, because just then Bill came back.

When we got outside, he said: "Hey, come on. Run like hell." Hell is not swearing. Hell is on every page of the Catechism. You can say it.

We did not stop until we got to the Twelfth Street bridge. We crawled under it.

Bill said: "Hey, that was sure easy as pie."

I said: "Gee Bill, you sure swipe stuff." He did not say anything. We knew he committed a mortal sin, but we did not say anything.

He opened his waist and showed me. I thought he swiped one, but he swiped fifteen. They were in a box made out of velvet. They were pens that cost a whole lot. One of them had a ticket. It said: \$18. I got scared to death.

Bill said: "Hey, which one do you want?"

I did not want Bill to think I was chicken or scared or yellow.

I said: "Oh, I will take this one." I took the cheapest. It was \$5.

He took the \$18 one and said: "Hey, what will we do with the rest?"

I said: "I do not know."

He said: "Well, here goes." He threw them into the water. It was a sandy bottom. You could see the pens.

I wanted to run. I am not goofy, and a fountain-pen does not scare me, but I wanted to run away. I did not want to go to confession, because the last time I confessed stealing miggs, and Father Andrew got sore. I mean he talked real loud. If I told him I swiped a \$5 pen, I bet he would yell. The holy people outside would hear him.

Bill said: "Hey, we better beat it. Let me go first. You wait five minutes."

He crawled away and left me all alone with the pens.

The pens did not scare me or anything, but I was scared about something. I got some rocks and mud and covered up the pens. It made the water muddy looking. There was a long streak of muddy water. It made me feel like a thief. But Bill did it.

All of a sudden I felt like running. I crawled out and started in. I ran and ran. I forgot where I was going until I got right in front of Drake's. I nearly keeled over when I saw where I was. I was winded, but I started in again. I ran all the harder. Pretty soon I was right in front of the church. The church and school are right next to each other. I thought it was funny as heck to be there again, because it was pretty near five o'clock, and a school is a punk place to be at five. I thought how come, and so I started for home.

I got a block away, and then I thought I better go back and say an Act of Contrition. Then I saw I was in a heck of a fix, because it says in the catechism that an Act of Contrition is good only if confession cannot be had, and there I was only a block away from the priests' house. The priest would hear my confession if I asked him. I thought I better go ahead and have it over with. Father Andrew would sure be sore.

Then I got a swell idea. I would ask for Father Joseph. He did not know about the miggs, so he would not be hard on me. It was sure a good idea, because now I could go to confession, and the fountain-pens would not scare me. I mean I would not be scared. Fountain-pens are nothing. It is nuts to be scared of them. I went back to the church. I ran all the way.

I asked the maid for Father Joseph, and he came down. Father Joseph has a great big belly and a double chin. He likes me. He says I am a keen pitcher. He knows a pitcher on the St. Louis Browns. He says I am the born image of this pitcher. I like Father Joseph very, very much.

I said: "Father, I want to go to confession."

He said: "Why not? So does everybody."

We went into church, and Father got in the confessional.

I told him what I did. I did not snitch on Bill. I just said I was in bad company a little while ago, and I swiped a fountain-pen. I am not a snitch baby.

Father said I had to return the pen or what it was worth or he would not forgive me. I said I would. He gave me absolution. I went out to the altar and said my penance, which was five Our Fathers and five Hail Marys in honor of the Blessed Virgin. Father Joseph is sure a keen guy. He did not make me feel cheap at all. He hardly said anything.

I got outside and started for home. I felt just grand. I started whistling hymns like I always do after confession. I had it all figured out about the \$5 pen. I would keep it. I would tell my mother I found it. It was a lie, but a lie is only a venial sin. You do not go to Hell if you have a venial sin on your soul. You go to Purgatory. Then you go to Heaven. Some day I will pay old Drake for it. I will do it when I get bigger. I bet Bill Shafer never pays for his.

IV

Bill Shafer used to chew gum before Communion. He sure thought he was tough. He sure thought he was smart. When you go to Communion you cannot eat or drink anything that is food or drink after midnight. You must fast. Bill used to come around to us guys before Communion and pop gum in our ears. He sure thought he was smart.

Sister caught him doing it, and she made him spit it out. It sure was keen, the way she told him to spit. He spit, and all of us guys laughed right out loud. We were in church too, only we were in the vestibule. Bili sure thought he was tough. We did not laugh like it was real funny. We laughed different, so Bill would sort of feel cheap.

We laughed like this: "He he he he."

Bill said: "Hey, Sister, how come? Gum is not food or drink."

Sister said: "Gum has sugar in it."

We sure got a big kick out of it. Bill sure thought he was smart. He sure felt cheap.

The next day he did it again before Communion. I mean he popped his gum. He sure thought he was tough.

One of the guys snitched on him. I know who it was, but I am not going to snitch on him just because he snitched on Bill. I am not a snitch baby.

Sister pretty near ran to where Bill was standing. He was standing there popping. She got a hold of his hair and jerked him around and said: "Spit it out! Spit it out!"

Bill said: "Hey, Sister! No sugar in this gum. This is old gum. I been saving it."

Sister said: "Say, young man, I have had enough of this. You must not dare go to Holy Communion this morning. The very idea! Young man, I want you to see Father Andrew right after Mass."

In the afternoon, in Catechism class, Sister sat right up in front of Bill and told him right out, right in front of us guys. She said what she thought of a boy who chewed gum before Communion. Gosh, she sure sailed in! Old Bill was sure sore. Sister said a guy who will do that must come from a funny house. I guess Sister is right, because I saw Bill's mother chew gum a lot. She is sure keen looking. I mean Bill's mother. Not Sister. Sister is goofy looking.

Then Sister told us a whole gob of stories about smart guys like Bill. She told us how they tried to be smart aleck with our Lord, and how He fixed them. He sure got even good and proper.

Sister said there was once another smart aleck like Bill who used to go to Communion every day. He went so many times that he got used to it, and pretty soon he started to be disrespectful. One morning he thought he would do something. Oh yes, he thought he was smart. He was going to do something real swell. He was going to take the Sacred Host out of his mouth after he received, and then take it home. So he went to Communion.

He did what he said he was going to do. When he came back from the altar, he put the Sacred Host in a dirty handkerchief. It was awful. I can hardly think about a guy who would do any such thing. But our Lord sure fixed him good and proper.

When this rotten guy got home, he took out his handkerchief, and for gosh sakes, was he scared? His handkerchief was all bloody. Our Lord's blood was all in it.

When the guy saw this, he fell on his knees and asked God to forgive him, for God's sake. Then he got up and went away and became a priest. He was so holy they made him a bishop. He is one now. He is back East some place.

Old Bill kept saying: "Bull! bull! bull!" He sure thought he was smart. He took out his handkerchief and played like he was looking for blood. He sure thought he was a wise guy.

After school, Bill said to me and Allie Saler: "Hey, I bet she made up that story about the bishop."

Allie said: "I bet she did not."

Bill said: "Hey, what you want to bet I can do it without getting my handkerchief all bloody?"

I said: "I bet you \$1,000,000."

Bill said: "Shake!"

We shook. I did not mean a real \$1,000,000. I only have \$2 in my bank.

The next morning after Mass, Bill ran after me and Allie. We were going home to breakfast. We go to Communion every morning in May.

He said: "Hey, you guys, come on! I want to show you."

We went to the washroom in the basement. There were some fourth-grade punks standing around.

Bill said: "Hey, you little kids, beat it."

We went into a washroom and locked the door. Bill took out his handkerchief. There was a Sacred Host in it. It was wrinkled and melty. You could see he took it out of his mouth.

I said: "Oh, my God!"

Allie made the sign of the cross. I thought it was a good thing to do, so I did too. Bill, he just laughed.

He said: "Hey, where is the blood?"

There was not a drop on it.

Allie said: "Come on, Tom. I have to go."

Bill said: "Hey, where is the blood?"

I said: "Bill, God will sure get even with you for this."

Bill said: "Hey, if you guys ever snitch, I sure will get even with you."

We said we would not snitch.

When we got outside the washroom, we heard the water running. I bet Bill threw the Host in. That is a sacrilege, and a big one, I bet. Bill will get his. Our Lord will punish him. He sure thinks he is tough. He sure thinks he is smart.

V

My favorite saint is Saint John. He is the one I was named after. Saint Joseph used to be my favorite, but since writing letters to him never has done much good, I have changed back to Saint John, and Saint Joseph is not like he used to be. It is a funny thing to think, but every time I pray to Saint Joseph I think about Joe Kraut. I mean every time I pray to him and I am not in front of his statue, which is supposed to look like him, I think about Joe Kraut, and Joe Kraut is not so swell to think about. Joe is only eleven, and he has three or four whiskers on his chin already, and he has a squashy chin, and he is fat. I guess maybe that is why Saint Joseph is so hard to pray to, on account of I think of Joe Kraut, and that is not such a keen thought. But I like Joe Kraut. He always has a nickel or so, so we go to the bakery after school and buy day-old pies.

In a way, I think Saint Joseph played me kind of dirty, after all the letters I sent to him. We write to him every year on his feast day. I mean all the guys and girls have to write down on a little note what they want most, and they also write how many prayers they will say to get it, and then Sister Agnes gets all the notes together in a bunch and she burns them, with the stove-lid off, so Saint Joseph will read them in the smoke. Anyhow, that is what Sister says, but I do not think much of it any more, or maybe Saint Joseph never read my notes, or if he did, he does not like me very much.

His feast day comes once every year, and on that day, for three straight times I asked for a bicycle. I asked for one of those swell Ranger bikes, brown frame, nickel-plated spokes and vacuum-cup tires. I never did get what I wanted.

After I did not get my bike the first two times, I went to Sister Agnes and asked her how come. She said, well, seeing as how a Saint only knows what is good for us, maybe he felt like a bike would do me hurt. I might get run over and get killed. And that is the reason he did not send any. She also said maybe I asked for too much, but a Saint is a Saint, and a bike is not too much for him to get for me, and besides, I would not get run over, because I can ride a bike better than anybody. After he reads your note, Saint Joseph goes to God and tells Him what is what, and God cannot refuse very well, because Saint Joseph was the foster father of the Infant Jesus when He was down here.

The other guys did not ask for as much as I did, I guess, but still most of them got what they wanted. Reinhardt asked for a new football, and sure enough, next day his father brought him home a keen Spaulding. I think I know how that came off, though. I think Sister Agnes read his note to Saint Joseph, and then she telephoned to Reinhardt's dad, who got the football right in his store, because he owns a clothing store and sells Spaulding stuff right in it.

Right after this last time I wrote to Saint Joseph, I went to Sister Agnes and said: "Sister, this makes the third time I'm asking Saint Joseph for a bike."

I told her this because I kind of had a

hunch she would telephone my old man, and then I would maybe get the bike. All the time, I also kept saying over and over in my head to Saint Joseph, I mean I was praying, like this: "O Saint Joseph, dear, sweet Saint Joseph, if you do not send the bike I will not pray to you again." When I prayed like that, I thought the bike would come for sure, because if Saint Joseph found out I would quit praying to him if he did not send the bike, then he would send it. He would not want me to quit him.

I wrote to him that I wanted this bike to be on our front porch when I woke up next morning. I thought it would be keen to wake up and find it there. I also thought if Sister telephoned the old man, he would have time to get the bike on the porch by next morning.

I went to bed real early that night, about eight or half after, and I prayed to Saint Joseph until I went to sleep. I also said my night prayers. I wanted to make sure I said enough prayers.

The next morning I piled out and ran to the porch. There was a bike there, all right. But it was not what I wanted. It was the second-hand one that used to be in Benson's window all the time. It was full of fly specks. The paint was chipped off. It had crazy, old-fashioned handlebars. I fixed it up anyway, and put on new paint, but I was awfully disappointed, because I wanted a new Ranger.

My mother cried when I told her how bad I felt. But she cries about everything about God. She said the bike got ruined on the way down from Heaven. She must think I am dumb as heck.

DRUG-STORE IN A DRY TOWN

BY BOB BROWN

IN LOCAL option towns, in the days before the Eighteenth Amendment, the corner drug-store took the place of the corner saloon. The real gaiety of the nineties, in fact, began with the shift of popular interest from the general-store to the drug-store, from homely hard cider to the sophistication of claret lemonade.

Out for a Sunday afternoon walk with his girl, a swain would invite her to take something with him at the pharmacy. There they could sit pleasantly for hours on end, partaking of the smart things of life, decorated with real imported cherries put up in Maraschino. If the old saloon was the poor man's club, certainly the old drug-store was the port of lonely hearts.

Churches and cemeteries were too gloomy for Sunday afternoon dalliance, there were in those days no movie shows, and the back room of a saloon, even if there were one in town, would have been low. So the courting couples went walking from one drug-store to the next, seeking refreshment in each. The ice cream sundae was invented for them, egg-nogs frothed in their honor, and there were fruit punches in Spring, as heady as May wine.

As a social center the drug-store thus beat out both church and saloon. It became the casual meeting place of the whole town, its cultural hub. In smart suburbs the drug-stores were only a few blocks apart, and even country towns often had two or three. When the saloon put in bigger and brighter lights the drug-store came

back with bigger and better fish bowls in its windows, with iridescent waters dyed red, green, blue and yellow, suggestive of liqueurs, symbolic of ruby port wines, pale sherries, gleaming crème de menthes, all to be had within. Inside, behind the gleaming globes, the store was warm, and a willing dispenser in a white bartender's jacket stood ready behind his marble slab to serve up the drinks, spiked or unspiked.

Local option had no terrors then. The drug-store served instead of the saloon. It was the only place in town where the sexes could mingle freely and drink together without scandal. If a girl had no beau she could go alone to the soda-fountain on the chance of picking up one. Without fear of reproach she could sit sipping her claret lemonades all afternoon, waiting for something to turn up. Or, if she were impatient, she could use the telephone to make a date. "Meet me here, Will. I'm at the drug-store." A very handy assignation place, with the only public telephone in town, discreetly concealed in a mysterious, tempting booth like a confessional.

At that time a claret lemonade was compounded with a full wine glass of real claret. The juice of half a lemon was added to take off the stigma and add a bit of zest. The drink was known to be smart because it was slightly intoxicating; indeed, a saloon bartender of that tender dove-colored period would have hesitated to serve a third claret lemonade to any young woman of the lower social circles who

chanced to be waiting for someone in his back room. Saloon-keepers, being professionals, knew something of the effect of intoxicants and made much weaker claret lemonades than the more callow soda jerkers. Safe in their amateur status, the soda clerks enjoyed experimenting with the effects of potent tutti frutti mixtures.

If a male drug-store-crawler were alone and not expecting to meet a girl, he disdained the trifling of the front store and went directly to the back room. There he joined a story-telling gang of his peers, tilted back in that private sanctuary called the laboratory or prescription-room. There he could enjoy his sarsaparilla with a stick in it, set his unfinished glass down on the ledge of the prescription desk, and use both hands in describing just how he loved them up, just how he put it over when he took the girls out sleighing. That was the room where adolescents too short in inches and years to be allowed in saloons first learned all about the sex-life of the bees and flowers. That was the secret room where steaming sagas were let off, true confessions that would have made a bartender blush. All shameful, hidden things came to life and utterance there. The place shrieked with laughter, shuddered with Freudian hair-raisers. A safe masculine retreat, on a par with the smoking-car on the trains to the city, and not nearly so sober and sedate as a saloon.

The drug-store was just as handy, too, for people who stayed at home and never entered it. They sent messengers instead. If Mama felt a bit down after a morning of heavy house cleaning, she could simply call Bud and say, "Buddy dear, Mama has such a bad headache. Run down to Mr. Gillespie's and bring back one of those big black bottles of that malt medicine. And get Mama's flask filled with the best gin. Mr. Gillespie will know what for."

Those malt medicines were higher in alcoholic content than Peruna itself. Some of them were the concentrated syrups of the very finest dark beers brewed in America. By the addition of a little water, and some brisk stirring to make the bubbles, a drink comparable to imported Münchener could be quickly mixed up. Such malt "tonics" found their sale chiefly in drug-stores, as body-builders for nursing mothers, tired-to-death mothers. Fine tonics they were, too; they did the work they were advertised to do. The drug-store gin also was first class—three star, no mere nigger gin.

If Papa missed the 8:18 in the morning, he wasn't really put out. The accident gave him just time enough to step into the prescription room, tip the wink to Mr. Gillespie and swallow a neat three fingers of Bourbon, smooth as velvet, out of a graduated beaker. The drink had a fascinating over-tone of illicit indulgence, the added bouquet of stolen fruit. For though it was not illegal for the druggist to sell Papa a snifter without a prescription, as it is today, he was relied on to exercise some ethical nicety of judgment in the matter.

On paper, he was supposed to compete with the saloon-keeper only in cases of medical need and in first aid emergencies. In practice, he acted often on generous impulse, for life in a small town has varied needs and is chuck full of emergencies. What if Papa had fretted and fretted about missing his train until he had a nervous break-down? What if Mr. Gillespie had withheld the drink and Papa had fainted right there in the store? Then Mr. Gillespie would have had to give him the whiskey anyway, even force open Papa's lips to pour it down and restore him. An ounce of prevention, two ounces of prevention, even three, if the customer calls for it.

To take any possible commercial curse

off the glass, Mr. Gillespie charged Papa only ten cents. Papa, in return, had all the family prescriptions made up there, and bought all his bottled goods from Amos Gillespie, too. Besides, Amos did not sell whiskey for the profit in it; only saloon-keepers stooped to that, made a real business of it, charged as much as fifteen cents to cover the heavy license. True, there were eighteen drinks in a bottle, and even at a dime each, retailed by the glass, a quart brought twice as much in the back room as it did when sold outright over the front counter. Yet there was the risk, the labor of washing glasses, and the service.

II

The druggist was a solid citizen. He dressed well, carried a gold-headed cane, and was among the first at church, as well as among the first to leave. Nobody begrudged him his fast trotter. Nobody called attention to his occasional flings in the city. Since he was an eligible bachelor, he could take the blonde fourth-grade teacher out for a ride without anybody lifting an eye.

He was among the town's elect. As head of an institution of real service, he became the general confidant. He knew what was good for the morning jitters; he mixed up a special hang-over pick-me-up that put hair on the chest and made a fresh day's work seem suddenly possible again. He kept Mama's gin secrets. He knew how to bring the roses back to little girls' cheeks. He gave candy to the offspring of his best customers, and kept his soda bar classy by discouraging the nickel trade. He sold certain things under the counter long before Margaret Sanger came out openly about them. Considerate always, he put them up in plain packages, and invented the help-yourself service for blushing brides.

He gave advice on intimate matters that

saved many doctor's bills. In fact, he was a sort of undiplomaed doctor himself. People said that if he had had the time to go to college he would have got his M.D. degree. He felt the call, but lacking the license, he had to pursue his little practice on the Q. T.

The registered doctor's office was handy, on the first floor above the drug-store. Doc Hartman and Amos Gillespie were cronies, buddies, always slightly respectful to each other, and at the same time suspiciously superior to each other's professions. Each had a little something on the other. They went duck-shooting and fishing together, sometimes patronizing the local dentist by letting him go along. When business was dull the Doc and Amos sat in the back room waiting for the phone calls, discussing the town's symptoms and bad bills, and the price of *spiritus frumenti*. How many grains of morphine poor Mrs. Jackson had worked herself up to. What Miss Flick did with all that ether. When the Doc's fresh supply of heroin would arrive. George Ade's latest gags. The respective virtues of blondes and brunettes. The use of mercury in certain noxious diseases.

"Excuse me, Doc. Got a customer." Amos would interrupt whenever the door opened. Leaving Dr. Hartman toying idly with a shiny new hypodermic needle, or musing over the day's assortment of patent medicine samples that had just come in, Amos would go to wait on the customer.

It might be Bud Hanks, fourteen, slightly tongue-tied today; a fifty-cent piece thrusting out between his forefinger and thumb.

"What'll it be, Bud?"

"Papa sent me for a pint of whiskey." Bud got the words out with difficulty.

"What? Another one this morning?"

"Yep. He's pretty sick."

Bud's eyes lit with the lie. Amos plainly

thought there was something phoney about it; but his not to question why.

He handed out the flask, took the half dollar and spun it into the till. Bud grabbed the bottle, hid it under his blouse and made a streak for the door.

The soda clerk winked at Amos as he went back to the prescription room. Amos frowned him down.

Safe in the seclusion of the back room he spoke softly to the Doc. "Bet that young Bud goes the same way as Old Man Hanks. That's twice this week he's been in after a pint for his old man; and I sent up a case to the house just last Saturday. Looks kinda phoney to me."

"Jenkins proves that alcoholism is hereditary," the Doc would say weightily. "If Bud is drinking the whiskey himself that only goes to prove Jenkins' contention. When a boy takes to it as early as fourteen, right here in a safe local option town like this, it certainly can't be put down to environment, can it?"

"I'll say not."

Sometimes kindly Amos Gillespie hesitated to sell pints to the young. But they insisted. It was the only place they could get the stuff; no saloon in the wringing wet neighbor towns would pass out drinks to an obvious minor. Amos's good nature usually got the better of him. How could he call all the kids liars wholesale? What did it matter to him if they did sample a little of it behind the barn? A kid has got to grow up sometime and know about things. Anyway, if he didn't supply the alcohol of experiment, some less humane pharmacist would, and his stuff was good quality, no rot-gut, wouldn't hurt a fly.

Some druggists were more particular than others. To get a drink from most of them, at least to drink it right on the premises, one must be known. But that wasn't necessary for a stranger who had

the air of a back room habitu , knew the ropes, coughed, cleared his throat, and spoke in an easy soft voice to the druggist.

Aside from being the only licensed drink-seller in town, Amos Gillespie was the only tobacconist. His cigar and cigarette counter was a great trade booster. The technical journals of the drug trade pointed out its value to him every week. It was better than a slot-machine, better than a punch-board or raffle.

He sold the makings in sealed muslin sacks, Bull Durham and Duke's Mixture, with pinkish-red little packets of Riz la Croix cigarette papers, either white rice straw or manly brown wheat straw. He threw in a lecture on the evils of cigarette smoking with every bag of tobacco he sold to a kid, usually on the kid's word of honor that he was buying it for some grown-up.

Kids liked to play with fire, smoke and fire water. They grew up into good customers for claret lemonades and egg-nogs.

Sometimes after her second drink that Jackson girl hugged the soda clerk, asked him to kiss her. Amos would have to put a stop to that, get her off gradually on to the comparatively harmless maraschino cherries, or the brandy chocolates, mildly exciting, but relatively innocuous because of the small quantity of alcohol.

Kids were a problem. Both boys and girls. How could anybody expect them not to be curious? How could anybody ever be sure they were telling the truth? They made root beer at home, birch beer, ginger beer. They smoked whip stalks, corn silk and tea leaves. Only natural that they should want to find out what real beer and tobacco tasted like. But Amos sold no beer, only nourishing maltine extracts for nursing mothers. He sold no tobacco to minors either, without cautioning them to take it straight home to their elders.

Often the ethics of his business presented

depressing problems. There were soft-drink addicts who came in a dozen times a day with furtive eyes and trembling hands reaching out for the strong stimulus concealed in fancy patent drinks. Even the yoghurt and kumiss, all the fermented milks sold over the soda counter, contained from three to six per cent of alcohol. Why did the law distinguish between them and real beer of perhaps less alcoholic strength?

III

Amos despised the namby-pamby soft drink and patent medicine addicts as much as he did the town drunk and none of them got any sympathy from him. While he could not refuse the trade of the first class he refused to sell whiskey to the drunkard. Let him lie and rot, stew in his own acrid stench, in the vacant lot across from the depot. Let him send his scared little brother with his grimy bottle, Amos Gillespie would never refill it for him. He was not on the side of sin; he was an up-standing, God-fearing man with a conscience. He was against drunkenness and all taking of drugs, except in their lighter forms.

He sold a good tawny sherry and a first class invalid port strictly on their medicinal merits. He mixed strong toddies for the frail and warmed the cockles of friendly hearts out of a bowl of Tom and Jerry at Yuletide. He gave red-nosed people something to warm them up when they were cold, but he bawled out inconsiderate customers who got drunk in his place. "Don't you know if you hit it up like that you'll shorten your life? Can't you see that drinking's a darn easy habit to get into and a darn hard one to get out of?" He handed out the bitter with the sweet, nicely balanced.

As the evening suburban trains emptied the city-weary at the home station a flock of village fathers, cindery with thirst, winged their way straight as the crow flies to Amos's back room. Somber in their business suits, they stood over their wee drops before dinner. Jolly as a bartender in his white drug-compounding coat, Amos talked and laughed with all of them.

There was no treating. He seldom took a drink himself. His place was a haven for solitary drinkers who paid for their own and went their respectable ways home, weaving but slightly.

In the front of the store Amos treated good customers to sodas, even set them up for those without cash. He sold stamps and chewing gum cheerily, and put on the girls' rubbers for them when the weather was bad. Sometimes he took a peep at their calves in the process.

In the back room he conducted afternoon and evening classes for boys out of school or home from work, taught them the astounding fact that marble dust is one of the chief ingredients in high class ginger ale, that it makes the snap; showed them the bottle of dusty Spanish grasshoppers labelled cantharides.

In later life, some of his classes picked up scraps of deadly dull knowledge at college, but all of them learned a lot more hanging around his prescription-room at night, or all day in vacation time. The mysteries of life were expounded there, cleared up. Amos gave a running lecture on the treatment of certain diseases while he mixed up vile-smelling rotten egg doses as happily as a born cook fluttering over a rising cake.

The talk ran from baseball to vitriol, including the astounding fact that hair combs were made by a special process from evaporated, compressed milk. All the cur-

rent "Believe It Or Not" stories originated in the rear of the corner drug-store. Could anybody drink four gallons of water in half an hour? Try it and see. The test was made on the spot. Yes. Bud Hanks could. He had almost as big a capacity as his father. He downed four gallons in the prescribed time and won Amos's fifty cent wager. Then he fainted, and had to be rolled across a barrel like a half-drowned man. Amos said it was a terrific strain on Bud's heart, pumping all that liquid through his system, and he shouldn't have done it. "Well, you bet I couldn't do it," Bud reminded him. "I know," admitted Amos, shelling out the half dollar. "Most other kids couldn't. They wouldn't even have the nerve to try it." There was a glint of pride in his eyes for Bud's achievement.

Nature's way was Amos's way. He always had a few sick lads he was treating for nothing in the back room. For mild cases he was as good as a doctor, and he didn't charge a cent beyond the price of the medicines. He let adolescents play poker, shoot craps and talk endlessly. He conducted a cultural center for the whole town. He didn't take to preachy, pious people, though for the sake of business he tolerated them and their taboos. In spite of the fact that he went regularly to church he always took a malicious delight in selling castor oil to preachers. Nobody ever talked of running him out of town for being too free with the booze. They couldn't, for many of the leading town fathers and church elders were among his best customers.

His place was as handy for discreet assignations as the doctor's waiting room upstairs. Both Amos and Doc were unmarried, and enjoyed a winking tolerance. Big-eyed women were seen flitting through the doctor's door and waiting outside the

drug-store by the mail box, around closing time. Slipping in and out of the telephone booth, holding long buzzing flirtations inside. School teachers and widows from other towns mostly, and a few fly grass widows from right near home.

When the blonde fourth-grade teacher failed to show up at school one morning, the story didn't get around for days that she had had a stroke in the night, and that Amos Gillespie had been seen running like mad in his shirt-sleeves from his flat on the third floor, down to Doc's on the second. The fourth-grade teacher was taken so bad they had to call an ambulance and send her away to a city hospital. She didn't come back.

Amos wasn't at the store next day. Doc Hartman and the soda jerker carried on alone, explaining to everybody that Amos was on a holiday. But the story got around that somebody saw two empty whiskey bottles in his room where the fourth-grade teacher got her stroke, and the school principal whispered that he thought he had smelled drink one evening on teacher's pink breath.

In a few weeks a new owner was dispensing in Amos's place. He threw out all the old gold-fish globes full of colored liquids, and piled in their stead impressive pyramids of malt extracts, Peruna, bitters, and blackberry brandy for dysentery.

He took a more lively interest in the bottle trade and cut the claret content of the lemonade down to half. He imported a new soda clerk from the city, a better looker, with his hair parted exactly in the middle; a more efficient flirter. In six months he doubled the soda business and made the back room popular by fixing up a sort of foot-rail for the convenience of the tired train trade, with whom he shook dice for the drinks. In all respects the drug-store became a saloon.

IV

In Des Moines, Iowa, and other rebellious dry cities, back in the 90's, owners of up-and-coming drug-stores went so far as to serve whiskey from their soda taps right out in front. Always allured by the illicit, a large number of Americans found drug-store drinking more exciting than saloon drinking. Others, seeking respectability and the society of ladies, contented themselves with claret lemonades at the soda counter. Many small town men gradually drifted from the back room to the more elegant soda fountain for their tipping.

When Prohibition came into being and speak-easies sprang up in place of saloons their custom was ready-made. The great population of drug-store drinkers greeted the new form of clandestine indulgence with enthusiasm. It is doubtful that the saloon itself, with all its solid virtues and valid enticements, was ever quite naughty enough for the small-town sports. The saloon was an importation from Europe, indigenously unsuited to backwoods America. While all the immigrants and second generation foreigners hated to see it go, dyed-in-the-wool Americanos welcomed the speak in its place as a splendid development of the drug-store back room.

The rapid change of the pharmacy back to the confusing general-store, where

books, phonograph records, cutlery, playing cards, bathing caps and chop suey eventually came to be sold, left the true drug-store addicts out in the cold. The proprietor of the new type drug-store had no time to shake dice or tell stories. He raised the price of his liquor to the saloon level, sought a bigger profit in banana splits, and discouraged the bottle trade in favor of water wings and Ingersoll watches.

The back-room habitué was pushed out of the up-and-coming expanded drug-store. No druggist or even soda jerker had time for him. With no place to go where he could really feel at home, suffering from the indignity of being asked for a prescription when he wanted something with a stick in it, the back-roomer sought sanctuary in the speako. There he enjoyed once more the faint familiar glow of guilt so necessary to his pursuit of happiness.

It is possible that these drug-store cowboys of the pre-Prohibition generation stand in the way of the saloon's come-back today. They do not enjoy the flavor of a decent drink in a common-sense saloon; they demand something more exciting in a snug, winking, *sub rosa* setting, recalling the old prescription room. They see in the speak-easy barman a familiar and reassuring figure. A boot-legger or speak-owner is to them a glorified Amos Gillespie, and worthy of all confidence.

THE PARIS RACKET

BY RANDOLPH BARTLETT

THE American population in Paris stands permanently at a minimum of about 20,000. This does not include any of the tourists who dash over for a few weeks or months for a frolic. Perhaps half of the 20,000 are in France on business—commercial, governmental, professional or journalistic. Probably 5,000 others are persons of independent means who prefer the European scene and have adopted France as their permanent home. Perhaps 3,000 more are painters, musicians, writers and students who believe, in varying degrees of honesty, that the atmosphere of Montparnasse and Montmartre is more conducive to serious work than that of Greenwich Village, Telegraph Hill or the Arroyo Seco. This leaves 2,000 still to be accounted for, and many of them would find it difficult, not to say embarrassing, to account for themselves.

These latter are the American racketeers of Paris, and they may be classified roughly as moochers, steerers, touchers, gigolos, beggars, sharpers, commissioners, *maquereaux*, tipsters, and plain confidence operators. Without visible means of support, they remain year after year, some fairly prosperous, most merely managing to eke out a precarious existence, but all parasites upon the American tourists who arrive in droves in Summer, and in dribblets the year round, landing with whoops of joy and a desire to spend money. When these trippers have spent what they brought, and perhaps cabled home for more, they return

to America, and upon sober reflection find a serious discrepancy between their expenditures and their results. The difference has found its way into the pockets of the town racketeers.

One of the most successful of the tourist-takers for a long time was a young man who will be called, in this narrative, Jones. He went to Paris to write, already having one or two moderately successful books to his credit. Soon he became a familiar figure in all the American bars in the neighborhood of the Place de l'Opéra and the Madeleine. These bars, by the way, bear little resemblance to the old-time American saloon. They are the actual American clubs of Paris, where transients and residents foregather for refreshment, dominoes, backgammon, or to satisfy a nostalgic yearning for hot dogs. It is an easy matter to become acquainted in them—rather, indeed, a difficult matter *not* to become acquainted—with bankers, journalists, painters, tourists, actors, captains of industry, pugilists, politicians, college professors, movie stars, and just dawdlers. In a foreign land the common tongue is always a social letter of credit.

Drifting into this pleasant company, Jones delayed carrying out his literary programme. Months passed, and he realized finally that he was nearing the end of his resources. Then he hit upon his great idea—an idea that supported him in comparative affluence for many months, and entailed no sordid toil.

Selecting one of his more prosperous acquaintances, with whom he had established a measure of familiarity, he would inquire casually if the other had any plans for the afternoon. If he happened to be free, Jones would recommend a new film or similar diversion, and pass to other topics. If the visitor had an engagement, however, Jones would say:

"Too bad. Thought you might like to go to the races with me and the Comte de Néant. He has one of the best stables in France."

"Some other time perhaps."

"Sure. By the way, he says he has a filly in the third race that is a sure winner."

"Think it's good?"

"Well, Jean has never let me down yet. I'm going to shoot a thousand francs."

Before they parted, the friend had given Jones anywhere from a hundred francs to a hundred dollars to bet on the horse, and Jones had agreed to be at the same bar at the same hour the next morning. He always kept the engagement. Nine times out of ten, the horse had failed to win, for our hero had discovered that while it is extremely difficult to pick winners, it is very easy to pick almost certain losers. He would be profuse in his apologies, remarking dolefully that he himself had lost more than he could afford. Needless to say, he never placed the bet. On the rare occasions when the selected horse, by some mischance, happened to win, he would return the money, explaining sadly that at the last minute he had found it impossible to go to the races after all, or else that he had been watching the totalizer and had neglected going to the betting wicket until too late—the horses were off and the *guichet* closed.

Without ever making a bet, and never—at least technically—stealing a sou, Jones lived well for a year or more in this man-

ner. Some days he would have as many as three or four clients, selected carefully from the patrons of Harry's, the Silver Ring, George's, Henry's or Johnny's, and each backing a different horse. He was wise enough not to work his game every day, and to select subjects who were unacquainted with one another. But the proprietors of the bars eventually discovered his racket, and he was quietly informed by each of them in turn that they would greatly prefer if he would confine his operations to the Left Bank, where the pickings are not so good.

Deprived of this steady and easy revenue, Jones may resume his so pleasantly interrupted career, but this is doubtful. Having once enjoyed the luxury of living content on small means derived from others, it is difficult for the expatriate—of either sex—to become interested in the more prosaic occupations.

II

Numerically, the women racketeers exceed the men, probably by two or three to one. Several hundred Jane Roes live in attics in that famous Quarter where most of the studying, painting, writing and drinking is done. The budget of one of these ladies for one month runs about like this:

Rent, 400 francs; fuel and light, 50; food (breakfasts only), 75; concierge, 25; car fare, etc., 100; laundry, 50; beauty parlor, 100; cosmetics, perfumes, etc., 100; morning paper, 25. Total, 925—perhaps a thousand francs.

While \$40 a month for living expenses is not extravagant, it is a great deal when you have nothing, and still have to make provision for most of your food and all of your clothing. Still, in an emergency, Miss Roe can reduce her budget yet further, for

among her seeming essentials there are only two absolute necessities, the first and last items—a place to sleep, and the daily paper.

Not too early in the morning, there is a light rustle at Miss Roe's door. The lady wakes, coughs, registers her customary matutinal vow to cut out smoking, decides never again to mix Pernod and cognac, and tiptoes gingerly across the bare floor. Retrieving the newspaper, she hurries back to bed and turns to an inside page. International complications, financial disasters, wars and rumors of wars can wait—the *Ile de France* is due at Le Havre.

Blinking, she consults the passenger list. Aaronson, Anderson, Apfel, Arthur, Bascomb, Beatty, Brown—

"What! Not Mrs. John Brown of Kansas City—pork Browns—dough-heavy! Now, who do I know in Kansas City? Kansas City . . . Kansas City . . . Let me think! Darn that Pernod! Maybe if I had some coffee . . . American coffee. . . Next time I put over something I'll go down to Bureau's and lay in a dozen cans. Brown . . . Kansas City . . . Kansas City. Wonder if I dare take an hour's sleep. Boat docks middle of afternoon. Should send radio. Wish I had a cigarette. What a life! Brown . . . Kansas City . . . Kansas . . . no, Missouri . . . Missouri . . . Kansas . . . farms . . . wheat. That's it! Wheat! Elevators . . . grain elevators. That's it! Who was that fat grain man—with the world's homeliest wife? Must have the name somewhere—sure to be friends of the Browns, too."

Painfully, she oozes out of her divan bed, finds robe and mules, and after ransacking the litter on a table in the corner, drags back to the couch her most valuable possession—a dog-eared memorandum book—a record, indecipherable to others, of the life of a Paris racketeer.

That afternoon, just as the *Ile de France* is nearing port, Mrs. John Brown of Kansas City, to her great surprise and delight, receives a radiogram:

Strange coincidence explain later stop many mutual friends stop hope you're staying at Hotel Gros Prix stop if not please call me there immediately upon arriving stop will be waiting to hear from you.

JANE ROE.

As Jane sits in the lounge bar of the Gros Prix that evening about seven o'clock, sipping a Pernod and smoking a French imitation of an American cigarette, there is only one cloud on her horizon—Mrs. Brown may have a friend with her who knows Paris, or she may have a friend already in the city. Otherwise, all is serene. Miss Roe has arranged for the Gros Prix to pay her 10% of the bill if and when Mme. Brown puts up there, and this alone will be a pleasing sum, but one of the least important in her anticipated campaign. Mrs. Brown has been instructed by her husband to go to the Hotel Metz, and being an obedient soul she goes there from the station. But what every American woman wants, perhaps more than anything else, the moment she sets foot on French soil, is a woman friend in Paris. So Mrs. Brown telephones to Jane, and Jane hastens, almost gallops, to the rescue.

"Why the Metz, of course, has the name," Jane admits superciliously, not many minutes later, in Mrs. Brown's room, "but nobody stays here, my dear, positively *nobody*. It isn't a hotel, really—just a tourist mill. True, the Gros Prix is a little more expensive, but over there you'll find you get just what you pay for, and the service—*my dear*, there's no comparison! Besides, I know the management, and I'll fix everything."

Then there is Jane's fluent French with the hotel attendants, so impressive to one

who has been memorizing lines from a phrase-book on the trip across, and who cannot guess how difficult it is for the Frenchman to understand Jane's mangled verbs. It gives one such a feeling of security to be with a woman who speaks the language and knows the names of the streets. So Mrs. Brown moves to the Gros Prix.

Jane does not need to bring up the most important point in her programme—the question of clothes. This arises of itself, as it seems always to do when two women converse in Paris.

"Of course," Jane remarks, in such a tone as one might employ in speaking of defective plumbing, "there are the *couturiers* who advertise themselves all over the world, if you just want to pay for a *name*. But the smart Parisian women never go to places like those. My dear, American women never even *hear* of the houses that really *make* the fashions. My friend the Comtesse de Rien was saying to me only yesterday, 'Don't American women know *anything* about clothes? Otherwise, why do they pay such fabulous prices at shops that not even a *midinette* would patronize?'"

So Mrs. Brown is conducted grandly to the ornately decorated Maison Quelquechose, and properly impressed by the deference paid to Miss Roe by the immaculately groomed manager. Lacking even normal sales resistance, she is helpless before the voluble French of the salesman (who can speak perfect English when advisable), and in translation Miss Roe contributes supplementary ideas of her own. So when Mrs. Brown pays ten thousand francs ("It's only four hundred dollars, you know," Jane reminds her) for a gown, she has the assurance that she is getting the very last word in material and design, at a bargain price arranged for

her by the obliging Miss Roe, who is giving up so much of her time to befriend a stranger in a strange land.

But Jane's bill to the Maison Quelquechose reads: 10% of price of gown, 1,000 francs; 50% of overcharge on same. 1,000: total, 2,000.

III

Some racketeers are satisfied with the 10% which most of the smaller shops in Paris agree to pay them for introducing customers. Others make such private deals as this of Miss Roe's, which they can arrange only with the less scrupulous houses, increasing the prices and sharing the extortion. The racketeer, having studied the victim, privately informs the merchant of the probable maximum price that can be obtained. Then, in the event of an argument, the racketeer can persuade the management to make a reduction, which still further ingratiates her in the confidence of her client.

This 10% commission is a widely recognized business institution in Paris, and not only are many shopkeepers willing to pay it, but they are also eager to enlist as many commissioners as they can. The shops in the centre of Paris depend so largely on the patronage of visitors, who cannot be reached by regular advertising, that the proprietors cannot afford to ignore any means of drawing trade. Some, however, enjoy international reputations which they guard jealously, and these have no traffic with the racketeers in any way. This is why one of the most familiar sneers of the percentage parasites is, "Of course, if you only want to pay for a *name* —"

On the one gown, Jane Roe's winnings are sufficient to defray her living expenses for two months, and a Mrs. Brown will surely not stop at a single outfit. Jane's

percentage at the Gros Prix will bring her probably three hundred francs a week so long as Mrs. Brown remains in Paris. Then too, she will dine with Mrs. Brown in return for showing Mrs. Brown where and how to dine, and will occasionally return the hospitality by taking her friend to some dingy hole-in-the-wall to give her a taste of "real Paris atmosphere." If the visitor's expenditure for gowns is sufficiently large to warrant it, the Maison Quelquechose will present Jane with a dress for herself in addition to her commissions. So that, if Mrs. Brown's suspicions do not become aroused and she does not wriggle off the hook, her visit to Paris will set up Miss Roe quite comfortably for several months to come. Each of the frugal ladies of the Left Bank attics needs only a few such showers of blessing *per annum* to maintain herself in pleasant indigence.

Moreover, Miss Roe, during such a shopping tour, will establish herself with many shops as a friend of wealthy visitors. She can then demand credit for private purchases, and obtain reductions in prices as well. The mere suggestion that she may take her next American friend elsewhere will inevitably bring the merchant to terms. Thus the French shop-keeper of the second class has developed against himself a system which can be broken down only by a unanimous agreement, such as never can be reached—or at least maintained—while store competes with store for the tourist trade. The first-class establishments cannot eradicate the custom, because it is all underground at the same time that its existence is undeniable.

The American racketeers in Paris range from those who collect their entire living from visitors to those less admirable individuals who have sunk to the level of mere moochers of drinks and meals. You sit on

the *terrasse* of the Coupole or the Dôme, where each table and chair creaks against its neighbor, and fully half of the patrons are Americans. As you order your refreshments, you receive no check from the waiter, but the saucer under each glass bears a price mark. When you are ready to leave, the waiter simply adds up your saucers. The system has the one advantage that you always know just where you stand, providing you are able to stand. The moocher strolls along the front of the café, recognizes you, and squeezes through the crowd to shake hands. He edges a chair up to your table, and a waiter arrives to take his order. It is not required that one spend much money at a café, but merely to sit down makes it incumbent upon you to order something.

The moocher orders his drink. A few minutes later he excuses himself—"just for a moment"—and leaves a five-franc saucer for your collection. You can refuse to pay—but it requires courage. There will be an argument with the waiter, who is innocent, and will have to pay if you don't. You will be the centre of attention of all Montparnasse, and the moocher knows that there are few Americans who would not rather pay five francs than have a debate with a *garçon* who, in such crises, automatically loses his ability both to speak and understand English.

One American, on his first visit to Paris, not being conversant with the saucer system, had an especially annoying experience. He was alone, and craved conversation. There was a rather jolly quartette at the adjoining table, and a chance remark gave him an excuse to join in the chatter. The afternoon meandered pleasantly for several hours. Finally, the neighboring party, ordering more beverages, found their table so littered with saucers that they asked the stranger to allow them to

put some of them on his table in order to make room for the new round. He consented. A few minutes later, one of the men at the other table called the waiter, apparently paid his bill, and the four departed. They had paid only for their final order. The lonely stranger, calling for his *addition*, found that he was responsible for all the saucers on his table. His conversation cost him nearly two hundred francs. He had been so injudicious as to inform his neighbors that this was his first visit to Paris, and also to ask why the waiters never cleared away the saucers. He recalled that this question had caused some merriment, but had not been answered.

There was one instance, not long ago, where the operations of percentage racketeers were not merely expensive, but actually disastrous to a too-easily influenced client. A certain young writer had an idea for a book with a continental background. He had never been abroad, so having about \$5,000 in his savings account, he decided to go to Paris. It would combine work and play for himself and his wife. They had been told how cheaply one could live in a Paris apartment, and believed they would be back in America in six months with a completed manuscript, and at least half of their savings still intact.

In Paris they were befriended almost immediately upon their arrival by an American, a chance acquaintance, and he showed them the city, at their expense. He knew the head waiters at all the night clubs, cabarets, cafés and restaurants—knew everybody. He convinced the author that it was impossible to do good work in a strange city until one had absorbed the spirit of one's surroundings. After several weeks and about \$1,000 had passed, the author began to worry. He decided to leave Paris, go to some small city in the provinces, and begin work.

The friend suggested the Riviera, pictured the beautiful surroundings, perfect weather, cheap living. When he had sold this idea, he persuaded his victim that the thing to do was buy a car—"just a cheap little car"—and drive south, declaring that in the long run the car would pay for itself. By the time the author had left Paris, he had spent about half of his capital and had not written a line. But his Paris friend had given him a note of introduction to a friend in Nice, who knew the ropes, and would show the couple how to live on next to nothing in the sunshine of the Mediterranean.

The friend in Nice greeted them with congratulations that they had arrived just in time to take advantage of the greatest little bargain in the entire history of the Riviera. A friend of his (the chain of friends always goes on, and on, and on) owned a villa in the hills overlooking the sea, and was going away for several months. The villa was a "gift," could be had for just about what it cost to maintain the grounds and pay the servants, who were to remain with the tenant.

They saw the villa. It was much larger and more luxurious than they had any need for, but it was really beautiful, and they were easily convinced that it offered the economical way to live. There were then many documents to be signed, all in French, which were off-handedly explained by the friend as mere matters of form, though from time to time a few hundred francs had to be paid over to the agent, who turned out to be a friend of the friend of the Paris friend, and likewise a friend of the owner of the villa. At length, all was completed, and the notary had been paid for his seal and his time and his paper and his stamps and even his ink, and the author sighed with relief. Now he could get down to work. The day

he and his wife drove out of Nice to take possession of their new home, the friend said goodbye, and he meant it.

The following day the agent arrived at the villa and with great politeness asked Monsieur please to give him a check for 30,000 francs, to pay the rent for the ensuing six months. Upon investigation it developed that the money which had changed hands covered only such incidentals as the wages of the servants, insurance, commissions. There was no way out. The writer paid, balanced his cash, discovered he had less than \$1,000 remaining, and this, it took little figuring to prove, would not maintain the *ménage* more than two or three months. So he sold the cheap little car for a fourth of what he had paid for it a few weeks before, turned in his return tickets, took steerage passage back to New York—and wrote his book in a Greenwich Village garret.

IV

It may seem quite obvious that this man needed a guardian. If to be utterly devoid of the faculty of suspicion is to need a guardian, he did. Three elements, however, combine to make even warier visitors than he mere children in the hands of the American racketeers in France.

The first is the utter helplessness and bewilderment that accompanies ignorance of the language of the country in which one happens to find one's self.

The second is the difficulty of adjusting the mind to a new currency. If a hundred francs is only \$4, a thousand francs, to the unmathematical mind, is not a great deal. Rows of zeroes fail to impress, so the general feeling of the visitor is that there is something rather trivial about French money, and until it reaches the millions it doesn't amount to much.

The third element is that these racketeers have acquired a certain cocksureness which only the more astute and sophisticated Americans can resist. A Frenchman will correct a *faux pas* tactfully, without suggesting that it was a sign of hopeless imbecility. The racketeer, on the other hand, will smile with a pitying air, as if he were wondering whether it were really worth while to try to do anything about such abysmal stupidity. He then laboriously sets his victim right, but in such a way that the shrinking traveler feels that to venture into any shop or café without this expert to aid and advise, is to court inevitable disgrace, perhaps deportation.

It would be inaccurate to suggest that this grand manner always carries the day, or that the lives of these steerers are all gold leaf and rose petals. The purpose of this monograph is merely to point out some of the lines of attack in general use. Still, how one of the more supercilious guides to *savoir vivre* ran headlong into embarrassment may be related here for its moral effect.

She was well known on the boulevards, and frequently mentioned the fact that she had lived in Paris eight years. Her favorite phrase, spoken with heaven-aspiring nose, was, "Of course, I don't pretend to understand American tastes any longer, *but* —" She was born, it might be added, in Nebraska, and was well past thirty before she was quite sure which ocean one crossed to go to Europe. She was square-rigged and domineering, and had taken in tow a newly-arrived American couple. One afternoon in the Café de la Paix, the visitors decided they wanted *fine champagne*.

The Duchess of Nebraska was horrified. Only by the exercise of magnificent self-control was she able to remain in the company of such barbarians. Patiently, and at

great length, she explained that one never had *fine* until after dinner—never. She told them the same thing two or three times, in slightly varying phrases, trying to make it quite clear and simple. The strangers, finally, got the idea—*fine* was an after-dinner beverage. Just then there arrived a Parisian gentleman of fashion, whom the couple had met on the boat coming over. They invited him to join them and he accepted. Asked what he would have, he replied without hesitation: "*Fine à l'eau, s'il vous plaît.*"

It is a mistake to imagine that it is only women, authors, drunkards and gilded youths who provide "pay dirt" for the percentage parasites. There is a certain business man of Indiana who, at home, is known to his associates as the cagiest living human. There is a tradition that when he receives a letter from the secretary of his Rotary Club, he gets the last previous letter from the files and compares the signatures, to satisfy himself that the new one is not a forgery. Last Summer he decided to visit the Colonial Exposition, and soon after reaching Paris he ran afoul of one of the most successful of all the racketeer brotherhood. This operator has all the outward characteristics of a substantial American business man. He is well versed in international finance and politics, knows what all the principal stocks have been doing in London, New York and Paris, speaks chattily of his Rumanian oil and North African agricultural interests, and spends money rather showily when he considers his prospect worth the investment. Let his name, for convenience, be Smith.

The gentleman from Indiana was flattered to find that this fellow-captain of industry seemed to enjoy his company, and was willing to pilot him about. They met almost every afternoon at a bar near

the Place Vendôme, and dined together frequently. Late one afternoon, a few days before the visitor was to sail for home, they met as usual, and Smith's greeting was more than ordinarily effusive.

"I was hoping you'd show up soon," he said. "I have a chance to buy an American car, almost new, at what looks to me like a great bargain, and I'd like to have your opinion."

They went out to the street, and Smith led his friend to an automobile of one of the more expensive makes. There was much conversation between Smith and a Frenchman (apparently the owner of the car) in French, and between Smith and the Indianan in English. The latter declared that he knew the model well, and that Smith would make no mistake to buy it at the price mentioned.

"Well, I'll have to chance losing it, I'm afraid," Smith finally remarked, after a long argument with the owner. "He says he has another prospect waiting, and unless I give him \$500 in cash right now, he's off to see the other fellow. He has to have the cash today, and won't take a check."

"I can let you have the five hundred and you can give me your check," the Indianan volunteered.

"Do you mind?" Smith asked eagerly. "It's awfully good of you."

They returned to the bar, Smith wrote the check, received the money, and went out to close the deal. He was back in a few minutes. The car was his and would be delivered the following day.

"By the way, you don't need to bother putting that check through," he said, as an afterthought. "We'll run up to my hotel and have a drink, and I'll get you the money there."

The visitor protested, but Smith insisted. He called a taxi and they drove to

one of the most expensive hotels in Paris. They went to the lounge bar, Smith ordered a drink, took back the check he had given, and left his victim while he went to get the cash. After half an hour it dawned upon the Hoosier that something was wrong. He went to the desk, and was informed that Smith was not known to the management, and that no person by that name had stayed there in months. He had simply walked out and left the visitor, adding annoyance to robbery, to pay for the drinks.

There was nothing to be done. It was not a police case. Smith owed the Indianan \$500, which he had borrowed. There was no legal evidence that the transaction was other than that. It was one man's word against another's. The check, bad or good, was gone, and the American could not stay in Paris to bring suit against a man from whom he probably could not collect a judgment if he won the case. It dawned on him also that his entire Paris sojourn had been more expensive than he had expected, and the cause of this began to be clear. It was easily explained, too, why Smith always met him in their favorite bar. His excuse had been that his hotel was some distance from the centre of town, while the visitor was staying at a hotel on the Place Vendôme.

This victim of the Paris racket could not

have been taken in New York for a thin dime by the smartest swindler in the world, but in Paris he would have all but bought an option on the Eiffel Tower or Napoleon's Tomb. And Smith had cunningly gauged the maximum for which he could be mulcted.

As has already been pointed out, all this is petty larceny, in comparison with big money rackets. These racketeers of Paris seldom go after the larger stakes, because they want to continue to live in France, and have a wholesome respect for the efficiency of the Paris police and the swiftness of French justice. A major swindle, even if the swindler could not be proved guilty in court, would inevitably result, if the authorities were sure of the facts, in the culprit being ordered to leave France.

So the racketeers confine themselves to the small but safe operations, and it is seldom indeed that one of them comes upon such a windfall as Smith found in the Hoosier. Percentages, commissions, overcharges, free clothing, food and drink, light borrowings, and beggings, constitute their principal activities. But the difference between the cost of spending a month in Paris under proper auspices and under the wing of one of these expatriates is sufficiently large that the wise visitor will be extremely wary of a friendship which seems to have ripened overnight.

AMERICANA

CALIFORNIA

LITERARY note from San Quentin:

The current issue of the San Quentin *Bulletin*, a prison publication, contains a dictionary of underworld terms. Without it, the editor explains, the average convict cannot understand the gangster jargon of the fiction writers.

SAD story from the Hollywood *Citizen-News*:

On March 19, about nine o'clock, a man ran over and killed my orange Persian cat. Later in the afternoon he came back, and I said to him that he was traveling at an excessive rate of speed. He said he was going around thirty or thirty-five miles at the intersection of Wilton place and Fernwood.

The insurance company would not do anything about it until I sued in the Small Claims Court and then they offered me \$10. I refused to take it, as it had cost me \$24 to bury the cat at the Pet Memorial Park, and \$12.50 for a marker. The insurance company said that I had no business to spend that much for a cat as I could have called the city and they would have taken it to the dumping ground. Well, we did not feel that way about our pet. So I took the matter to court.

The judge took the driver's testimony against two eye witnesses and let him go free while we have to give up our pet, besides having the expense. If that is justice it certainly is not real justice in my opinion.

MRS. EOLIA FREEMAN.

PROGRESS of the Higher Learning at Stanford University, the pride and glory of the Pacific Coast:

The first fishing class instituted at an American university began its course of

instruction here today. Charles M Sprague, associate director of physical education, prefaced a short practice in fly-casting with a few remarks on the care of rods, preservation of the enamel on lines, making of flies, and an outline of the activities facing the class.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

FROM the files of Congress:

72D CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. J. RES. 392

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. FULLER introduced the following joint resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary and ordered to be printed.

JOINT RESOLUTION

To promote patriotism by providing that all officers and employees of the United States and the District of Columbia shall know the national anthem.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That after the date of the enactment of this resolution every examination for admission to the classified civil service prepared and held by the Civil Service Commission shall test the ability of the persons examined to write or recite from memory the words of the national anthem, and the Civil Service Commission shall not certify any applicant as eligible for appointment in the classified civil service who fails in such test.

SEC. 2. It is the sense of the Congress that after the date of the enactment of this resolution no person shall enter upon any civilian or noncivilian office, position, employment, or enlistment in any branch or service of the United States Government or the government of the District of Columbia unless such person has learned to

sing the national anthem from memory or to write or recite the words of such anthem from memory.

SEC. 3. The head of each department, independent establishment, office, or agency in every branch or service of the United States Government or the government of the District of Columbia is authorized and directed, within sixty days from the date of the enactment of this resolution, to make provision to enable every person rendering civilian or noncivilian service at the date of the enactment of this resolution in such department, independent establishment, office, or agency, to learn, and to prove his ability to sing the national anthem from memory or to write or recite from memory the words of such anthem.

FLORIDA

MEDICAL statistics in the celebrated *Tampa Tribune*, discovered by the alert hounds of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*:

Dr. Dublin said reports of the first 1000 cases, submitted by Mrs. Mary Breckinridge, director of the service, showed not a single death as a direct result of childbirth. Two men had died of disorders not attributed to motherhood.

IDAHO

SCIENTIFIC announcement in the *Los Angeles Times*:

MAN CAN TALK WITH GOD, SAYS NOTED
PSYCHOLOGIST

A new and revolutionary religious teaching based entirely on the misunderstood sayings of the Galilean Carpenter, and designed to show how we may find, understand and use the same identical power which Jesus used in performing His so-called miracles, is attracting world-wide attention to its founder, Dr. Frank B. Robinson, noted psychologist, author and lecturer. Psychiana, this new psychological religion, believes and teaches that it is today possible for every normal human being, understanding spiritual law as Christ understood it, to duplicate every

work that the Carpenter of Galilee ever did, even to raising the dead—it believes and teaches that when He said, "The things that I do shall ye do also" He meant what He said and meant it literally to apply to all mankind, through all the ages.

Dr. Robinson has prepared a 6,000 word treatise on Psychiana, in which he tells about his long search for the Truth, how he finally came to the full realization of an Unseen Power or force so dynamic in itself that all other powers and forces fade into insignificance beside it—how he learned to commune directly with the Living God, using this mighty, never-failing power to demonstrate health, happiness, and financial success, and how any normal being may find and use it as Jesus did. He is now offering this treatise free to every reader of this paper who writes him. If you want to read this highly interesting, revolutionary and fascinating story of the discovery of a great Truth, just send your name and address to Dr. Frank B. Robinson, 350 Main St., Moscow, Idaho. It will be sent free and postpaid without cost or obligation. Write the Doctor today.

ILLINOIS

THE alert agent of the Associated Press discovers a new champion in the great city of Chicago:

Paul Ellis is sixty-five, estranged from his tenth wife, is wooing an eleventh prospect, owes his ninth \$166, is the father of sixteen children and the grandfather of five, has been in jail four times for defaulting alimony, and faces six months more. Fourteen charitable organizations are helping his ten families.

FROM *Photoplay*:

A girl friend of mine who is spending the year in California and whose uncle works at the studios, has just sent me a hairpin which, she says, belonged to Marlene Dietrich. And am I thrilled! Doesn't that prove in a measure what power the stars have over us everyday people?

DAISY COVINGTON,
Harrisburg, Ill.

OKLAHOMA

CAMPAIGN card of a public servant of Osage county:

REPUBLICAN NOTICE TO VOTERS

Meet your next County Commissioner of District No. 2, Osage County, Oklahoma

V. L. McFARLAND
(JUDGE SOKUM)

At one time pronounced to be the most beautiful baby in the world. He has asked no one to vote for him and has made no promises.

For past six years has been justice of the Supreme Court and acting coroner of Big-heart township, in Osage county, and holds said position today and in addition thereto is police judge at Barnsdall, Oklahoma.

NUF-SED

PENNSYLVANIA

FROM the Philadelphia *Evening Ledger*:

Sale of foreign-made articles to support an American shrine was criticized today by leaders of patriotic societies in this city.

The shrine in question is the Betsy Ross House at 239 Arch street, reputed to be the house wherein the first American flag was made by Betsy Ross.

The building is not endowed and has no public appropriations. It is supported by the public, as indicated by a sign seen by the visitor on entering, reading: "This shrine of American Liberty is maintained free to the public from the proceeds of souvenirs and postcards."

The novelties on sale include metal ash-trays, belt buckles, postcards and a variety of other objects bought by tourists, school children and others who visit the site.

About 75% of the articles sold are marked "Made in Japan." These consist principally of pewter trays selling from fifteen to fifty cents, salt and pepper shakers selling for \$1, paper-knives and other metal trinkets.

Mrs. G. Howard Shriver, president of the Pennsylvania Society, Daughters of Founders and Patriots of America, described the conditions as "awful."

SOUTH DAKOTA

THE art of the headline writer, as exemplified by the eminent *Mitchell Gazette*:

HOOVER, NORBECK, CHRIST,
GREEN WIN S. D.

Norbeck for U. S. senator.

Christopherson for congressman, first district.

Williamson for congressman, second district.

Green for governor.

That's the way the results of the Republican primary lined up.

TEXAS

THE art and science of criminology in this great State, as reported by the *San Antonio News*:

Yesterday, John Henry White, a Negro, was sentenced to five years in the penitentiary for stealing a dollar. Today, W. A. Sullivan was sentenced to two years in the penitentiary for killing Mrs. M. E. Fitts.

MOTHER'S DAY hullabaloo in the celebrated *Amarillo Globe*:

GIVE MOTHER

A

LASTING GIFT

A SET OF

MAYO'S PLATES

You will find the quality of our plates unsurpassed

And the Prices the Lowest in the City

See Us First and Save!

MAYO DENTAL CLINIC

AND LABORATORY

Dr. Mayo and Associates Phone 2-3436
IN MASSIE BUILDING, FOURTH AND POLK STS.

WASHINGTON

SCIENTIFIC announcement in the *Metaphysical News* of Seattle:

UNIQUE FEATURE IN
ADVERTISING

A new and entirely legitimate feature of advertising is that when an advertisement is accepted for publication in the *Meta-*

physical News, the contract and copy is first given a metaphysical treatment. This assures the publication of only the highest class of advertisements, and is one of the reasons why we know that advertisements in this newspaper will bring good results and at the same time guarantee our readers against the unscrupulous.

WISCONSIN

THE local correspondent of the Associated Press at Manitowoc encounters a new development of the Noble Experiment:

Deputy sheriffs stood guard at a downtown saloon here last night after the operator of the place appealed to the sheriff's office for protection against Chicagoans he said had threatened to close him up unless he took their beer. A representative of the Chicagoans appeared at his place yesterday, the saloonkeeper said, and hinted broadly that the city's saloons had better purchase their supplies from Chicago if they didn't want trouble. The saloonkeeper notified the sheriff's office and deputies were posted to halt any attempts at disorder.

GENERAL

THE sublime process of choosing bishops of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, described by the ecclesiastical correspondent of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the *Manchester Guardian* of Aframerica:

The balloting began Friday morning at eleven o'clock, and at three o'clock Saturday afternoon the third bishop was elected. Vote-swapping, lobbying, cheering and election demonstrations reminded one of the political battles back home. Bishop R. A. Grant, of Alabama, presided.

The first evidence of election trades came to light on the third ballot, when Williams was elected and Sims barely missed beating him by 18 votes. The little fellows had fallen by the wayside and thrown their strength to Sims. Williams, having won, was now ready to help somebody else. It is probable that some of his support went to Wesley, because the Washington, D. C., minister began to look

like a formidable opponent. Sims' strength was now so powerful that his success was assured, and on the fifth ballot he came through with 329 votes. He had received the support of South Carolina, Georgia, Texas, Alabama, Mississippi and Florida.

The battle now rested between Wesley, Tookes and Wright. With Sims and Williams eliminated, the remaining candidates must rely on the great Southern vote to put them over. Dr. Wright withdrew, with the understanding that he would be supported for reelection as editor of the *Christian Recorder*. On Wright's last ballot, the sixth, he polled 117 votes, Tookes 141 and Wesley 274, just 16 less than the number required for reelection.

The number of votes polled now was 598, as against 713 when the balloting began. It was five o'clock in the morning. Many of the delegates had stolen away for a quiet sleep, others had gone to their hotels. The presiding officer, Bishop Grant, remained at his post. He frequently indulged in cooling draughts of pop and ice cream. Bishop Brooks was also on hand. Bishops Flipper, Ransom and Gregg retired while the ballots were counted, but returned and voted each time.

All of the delegates were not asleep. The confusion and noise seemed endless. They shouted, marched up and down the aisles, distributed ballots and behaved like the average enthusiastic voter. . . .

The seventh and last ballot! The battle was between Wesley and Tookes. The electioneers were busy. Tookes was in conference with leaders from Texas, Alabama, South Carolina, Georgia. It looked like the South was going to get behind her favorite son. On the other side of the house the North and West were busy. The dreaded sectional feeling was asserting itself. At last Bishop Grant called for the vote. The long, seemingly endless trail of delegates filed by the ballot box.

One hour, two hours of counting! Then, the results, Tookes, 311; Wesley, 289. The crowd went wild. A dozen men lifted Tookes and carried him up and down the aisles. Another group hastened to congratulate Wesley on his splendid showing. The presiding bishop called for order. The election of bishops was over.

TWO KINDS OF COUNTRY PEOPLE

BY WALTER A. TERPENNING

WITH an ethnocentrism almost equal to that of those savages on the Congo who pity the white man and say, "He is without background; he has not had the advantages of our society," American country people have always looked down upon European farmers. The old world tillers of the soil have been called, and in fact, call themselves, peasants, a most unpleasant word to American ears. Feeling the contempt of his urban neighbors, the American farmer has tried to compensate himself for his sense of inferiority by an imaginary ascendancy over all the other farmers in the world. This illusion has been shared by most American tourists and even by serious students visiting the European countries, for the latter, like the former, have commonly rushed from city to city, deeming rural people and scenes beneath their notice.

After living eighteen years of my life in an American farming community, it came as a complete surprise to me to find all the members of a Russian *mir* taking baths and putting on clean clothes regularly once a week, and I was surprised almost as much to find Danes with as few as five acres of land bragging about their prosperity, English farmers wearing plug hats on Sunday, Hollanders farming the bottom of the ocean and not complaining of the hardship, Swiss farmers sending their daughters to London to study English, and Irish farmers who could talk intelligently about international politics.

After making intimate acquaintance with farmers in thirteen European countries, I know of no experience which will so readily dispel the comfortable hallucination of American superiority as a visit to a German village. The German farmer is really civilized, and if all other arguments fail, I believe that a few months association with him will be enough to convince even the blindest and dumbest American of the tragic mistake of our ever having waged war on such a people. The slaughter of German farmers in the World War was a loss to the world as well as to their own country, and our part in that slaughter, like our part in the economic conspiracy to crush Germany since, can be attributed only to our appalling ignorance of the true qualities of the German people. If ignorance ever deserved punishment, the United States surely deserves the strafing it is now receiving as the result of that savage mistake.

To understand the difference between the human products of American and German agriculture, a difference as wide as the sea that separates the nations, it is necessary to understand the difference between the rural social life of the two peoples. This difference is most obvious in two familiar community activities—activities which in America appear to be at opposite ends of the scale, but which in Germany seem closely associated, namely, recreation and religion.

One of the joys of life which belongs to

every boy and girl, by virtue, as O. Henry would say, "of all the unwritten, sacred, natural, inactive ordinances of the equity of Heaven", is wholesome, re-creative play, and there is no activity the promotion of which, or rather, the opportunity for which, constitutes a greater human need of American rural people. No more pathetic figure is to be observed in America than the country child *who has to be taught to play*. Most adults in our rural communities have balked the urge for play until they are no longer conscious of it, but the young still suffer, and their suffering is probably the main cause of the much advertised and much bewailed city-ward migration. Country youth count their pleasure by years, not by hours, and most of the few recreations that they have are furnished by the village, not by the open-country neighborhood. They include, typically, the annual county fair, the annual Fourth of July celebration, and the annual or less frequent circus. But such non-participating recreation has little relation to play that really re-creates. After living to adulthood in an American rural community, after having seven years experience in rural social work, and after having made an intensive study of rural life in two typical counties, I am of the opinion that most of what passes for rural recreation among us is positively demoralizing.

In most parts of the United States the district school still functions as the most effective recreational agency. Here, for three brief periods each day, country children of the school age realize their only opportunity for play aside from that allowed in the family group. The school, however, faces serious handicaps in performing this important function. In the first place, children come to it without having had any previous experience in a normal play group, and, usually, with their

play instinct already suppressed. Thus they are in need of supervision, as European village children are not. Their teachers are usually the culls of the teacher-training institutions, and, having little aptitude or time for such supervision, are likely to interfere only when the most extreme anti-social conduct calls itself to their attention. The school ground is usually too small, and it is poorly adapted to recreational needs, and unequipped as a playground. Taken together, the lack of any knowledge of how to play among the pupils, the neglect of supervision, and the inadequacy of the equipment make organized play almost impossible. The games are thus likely to be of a simple, individualistic, every-man-for-himself variety.

Because of the supersensitiveness of American rural people in matters of sex, due largely to the lack of wholesome social contacts between the sexes outside the family, it is still a common practice in many rural schools to separate boys and girls in the schoolroom and on the playground. This expression of the local *mores* complicates the problem instead of solving it. Far from taking sex for granted, the farm boys and girls become intensely preoccupied with it, and learn far more about gender in school than about number and case. The playing together of boys and girls would go a long way toward civilizing this sex interest, but recreation in the American rural schools knows none of it. So the prohibition only increases sex curiosity, and drives boys and girls to a surreptitious association on the way to and from school or wherever an opportunity offers itself.

All this not only fosters a sex barbarism, but misses an opportunity to promote co-operative habits. The steady stress on going it alone, each for himself, accounts in large degree for the futility of the later efforts of rural people in all kinds of rational co-

operation. The youngster who has been forced by a chip on his shoulder to fight for the amusement of older pupils is likely to grow up with a psychological chip on his shoulder, and the sensitive boy who has endured persecution at the hands of other youthful barbarians in a rural school because of a hole in his trousers, or because of any other peculiarity, will suffer from a warped view of human nature that will make him an inefficient and unhappy member of society.

Other forms of group recreation in American rural communities are even less wholesome than that offered by the schools. Even an informal party of young people is usually a drab and boresome affair. The weary would-be participants either sit around and look at one another self-consciously, or else, in case some reckless one gets up his nerve to "start something", engage in extravagant and vulgar carousing. One who has suffered the pangs of the damned in delivering himself of a "piece" or who has had to listen to a programme of silly recitations at a rural celebration will see little connection between such celebrations and *play*. And the quarreling and "killing the umpire" at a rural ball game in the few communities in which young people are allowed time for such sports has little more relation to it.

There is no area of our social life where sex discrimination is greater than in the country, and in no activity is that discrimination greater than in recreation. Even the much-celebrated swimming hole is for boys, not girls. Americans who have lived through a boyhood in the country will admit that their most enjoyable and edifying sports were such solitary ones as hunting and fishing, which is to say, the most barbarous ones. Those who, in later years, resorted to drink did so not as a means of gregarious conviviality, as do Europeans,

but to drown their loneliness. The countryman of my time was wont to take full and desperate advantage of his infrequent visits to the saloon. Such orgies as those of one of my neighbors, who used to get drunk every Saturday night, race his spirited horses all the way home and, unhampered by the interference of his distant neighbors, chase his wife and son about the house with a butcher knife, were not uncommon. Those who wish to understand the fanaticism of the more thoughtful farmers against the liquor traffic must take such perversions of conviviality into consideration.

II

There are many influences, such as his isolated form of residence and the necessity for hard, continuous labor, which help to account for the lack of recreation in American rural communities, but no factor is more to blame than the fanatical and tyrannical Puritanism of the prevailing religion. American farmers have a huge assortment of creeds and denominations. I counted twenty-four among the families of one Michigan county, three of which had members in the four families living along one mile of road. They ranged all the way from the common varieties of Methodists and Baptists to the uncommon ones of Winebrennarians and Burning Bushers. Their creeds encompassed everything but cannibalism, and yet they all had two things in common: a strong conviction that man was made for the Sabbath, and another that any project for the enjoyment of life was of the Devil. One had not to go far in any direction in the country to find churchmen who were ready to invoke the Blue Laws to prevent a ball game on the only day on which the country youth had time for it.

I know of one rural community with five church buildings and five congregations. All five congregations on an ordinary Sunday could be seated in the gallery of one of the churches; but no group of children or young people bent on having some innocent fun would be allowed to profane the empty basements of any of their temples. I once helped to organize, and find responsible adult leaders for, eight interdenominational groups of boys, and had the Ministerial Association serve notice on me to the effect that unless the groups were disbanded and reorganized by denominations, the Association would withdraw its support. The groups, I need not add, were not reorganized and the Association's support was never missed. Many of my students who go out every year to teach in rural schools report that they have to forswear dancing and even do their smoking on the sly in order to hold their jobs, so strong is the Puritan tyranny. I know of one superintendent of a rural high-school who says that for years he did his smoking in his bathroom with the curtain drawn.

As a boy I attended church in a rural community in which there was no denominational competition, but all of the local ecclesiastics used to spend much of their time in extolling the virtues of their special brand of orthodoxy and condemning the various other brands. They had got the habit, and could think of little else to preach about except the unpardonable sins of dancing, card-playing, and theatre-going. The latter was not a serious danger as there was not a theatre within fifty miles. I fell from grace by learning to play cards in my uncle's sugar bush, but I had to wait to learn to dance until I was a professor in a State college.

As I sum up the benefits of my religious training in that community, I can count only two. I learned some pleasant music

which I still love, although I cannot subscribe to the words to which it was sung, and I became familiar with some of the world's great literature. So far as the moral influence of the local denominational religion upon the young was concerned, it had one of two effects. Either it threw them into a half-hysterical, morbid conviction of sin, or it disgusted them with everything religious. Most of the religious sentiment which I still retain I owe to the only cultured man who ever lived in the community, and to his wife, who had a sound appreciation of the life and teaching of the Carpenter of Nazareth, and conducted a union Sunday-school which I was privileged to attend. I know of few other American rural communities which have ever had such superior members.

Instead of promoting the brotherhood of man, the rural church is usually a disintegrating factor in rural life. The relations among religious people, even in the same denomination, remind one forcibly of the condition of life described by Huxley in his interpretation of evolution—a continuous free fight, a reign of tooth and claw. If anyone doubts this statement, let him try to induce the rural representatives of differing Christian sects to sing out of the same hymn-book. Such "neighborliness" develops a freakish, kangaroo sort of individuality which can have no more useful function in the social organism than the vermiform appendix in the human body.

The caricatures of Dickens' stories are no more extravagant than many flesh-and-blood characters of my boyhood home. Most of them had favorite sayings which served as effectively as identifying devices as Barkis's willingness or Micawber's waiting for something to turn up. One who knew many women used often to repeat: "I goll, women are too plentiful for me to live alone." Another, who was a Bible stu-

dent, used to observe that he "could prove by the Bible that salt water'll take the ticks off'n sheep." A preacher solved the problem of reconciling his need for profanity to the Methodist discipline by the invention of the substitute, "Crotch hemlock, gimminy crymus, rabbit the luck!"

There was little appreciation of music in the neighborhood, and not much music to appreciate, but several neighbors were known for their singing, and a description of their songs is the best description of them. As their associates were men of few words, but words that were often repeated, so they were singers with short répertoires, but répertoires that were sung through so often that they were as familiar to their audiences as to themselves.

Jim Huntley used to furnish the entertainment for loggings, barn-raising, hog-killing, and other such social functions. He specialized in "Dick Darby, the Cobbler", which he rendered most dramatically. Some of the stanzas were as follows:

My old wife, she's blinky, she's blary,
Beside she is hump-backed, she's black;
She is the old devil for scolding,
Her tongue it goes clicketty-clack.

My old wife she does like tobacco,
I never see the beat in my life;
I thought she would spend all my earnings,
So I broke her old nose with a pipe.

Me and my old wife went after some
water,
We began for to quarrel and to fight;
I dipped her three times in the river,
Then fondly I bade her good-night.

After each stanza he sang the chorus:

With my ping pong and my needo,
My ding fi, my ding fi, my day,
My hairy bolary, bolary,
My fal diddle lary o'day.

Jenson Trim never sang except by request, but the request always came from

himself. His favorite was "Joe Bowers", a ballad which told of the exploits of the hero in his love affair with Sally, the most exciting part of which was:

Says she to me, "Joe Bowers,
You are the man to win,
We'll seal the bargain with a kiss",
And she hove a dozen in.

"Joe Bowers" was sure to be followed by "The Old Leather Breeches", and "So We Went A-Courting 'Cause We'd Nothing Else To Do". The old leather breeches were an heirloom of a family of Irishmen who ran a hotel and who, in an extremity, found it necessary to serve them fried to a party of travelers. The repast was satisfactory until one Flannigan held up an ivory button and exclaimed,

We're poisoned, bedad,
Let's send for the praste,
He's fed us the old leather breeches.

We had one prodigy of instrumental music, a neurotic fellow who had learned to play simultaneously a mouth organ, which he attached to his ears, and "chords" on the piano. He always executed three numbers, "Old Zip Coon", "The Devil's Dream", and "The Irish Washerwoman". Another local favorite used to embellish the Christmas programme with the stunt of eating several yards of strung popcorn and then, with gags in imitation of a choking chicken, extracting the bare string from his gullet. Such were the fine arts in that community.

Notwithstanding the annual evangelistic debauches and the energetic ministerial exhortation in season and out according to the Methodist plan of salvation, there were plenty of unregenerate souls among both old and young. These furnished numerous scandals. Once eight young men were arrested for rape, all in one evening, on a girl who was under sixteen. The incident

happened before the time of the automobile, and the young men, one of whom was a school teacher, passed the lady from one buggy to another. The girl's older sister was also raped by a young man of the district who braggingly described the process by telling how he got one of her fingers in his mouth and chewed it until she submitted. An elderly widower brought an old prostitute into the neighborhood, and he and his two sons lived with her for several years.

The more openly immoral people of the neighborhood were in some respects the most interesting, but the rehearsal of their numerous exploits was certainly not edifying to youth. Their stories furnished the respectable members with an exciting vicarious immorality. One member who grew up in the community later became a horse thief and highway robber, but the older residents used to tell how superior he was as a young man to his brothers who remained in the community. I have kept closely in touch with it and have observed little improvement. It is not surprising that Sir Horace Plunkett should say to an audience of American farmers: "The open country is characterized by a backward and barbarous point of view". The fact is that the American open-country farmer well deserves the appellations of mossback, rube, and hayseed.

III

His miraculous translation to a German rural community would greatly revise his estimate of the possibilities of human nature. I have been thus translated. I can do no better than tell of my personal observations. My first acquaintance with a German peasant resulted from my wife's running our car into a ditch. A young German carried loads of planks and a

heavy wagon-jack, worked half an hour in prying the car out of the mud, and refused to accept pay for his services.

I took our car to a garage and asked to have the valves ground. The mechanic said he was not busy, that he could have the work done in three hours, and that the price would be eighteen marks. He asked permission to drive the car around the block before beginning the work. When he returned he explained that the valves did not need grinding. He then adjusted the carburetor, and charged me two marks.

Before beginning the study of German village life which I had planned, I wished to enter my three children in a German school. It was the middle of the term and the school was full. My children knew hardly a sentence of the German language. The faculty met to discuss our application. The first person to urge that the children be accepted was a young man who had had most of his under jaw blown away in the war—by an American shell.

The children were admitted, and with fear and trembling went to school the first morning expecting to be ridiculed and treated as *Ausländer* would be treated everywhere in rural America. They came home the first night with an hilarious report of the friendly reception they had received and of the kindnesses of the chums they had already found. They discovered teachers and pupils who could speak English. They attended the English classes and got as much fun out of the German teachers' and pupils' mistakes in English as the German teachers and pupils got out of their mistakes in German. Instead of their foreignness causing them embarrassment, it made them the more popular. They were soon demanding the German knapsacks and school caps which they still treasure, and were taken into full membership in the play group.

They were called for by German children at six o'clock in the morning on the weekly *Ausflug* day, and escorted to the railway station or other starting place. Parties were given in their honor, and they were not once made to feel unwelcome or unhappy in their association with either teachers or pupils. They learned German faster than their father ever did. When we left, school was let out for *Aufwiedersehen* and for the taking of photographs by both Germans and Americans. The letters which they have since exchanged with their German schoolmates, each in the other's language, and the postage stamps they have swapped, are surer tokens of international peace than all the constitutions of the League of Nations.

At that rural village of Groszhartau in Saxony the Terpenning family were treated like old residents. We all received the same sort of reception which the children enjoyed at school. We were repeatedly entertained at feasts and *Kaffeetrinken* in the homes. We attended every kind of neighborhood gathering held during our stay. We followed the workmen and workwomen about the fields and barnyards. From the time of our introduction to the first villager to the moment we said goodbye and heard the young man of the *Rittergut* (landed estate) say it was like parting with relatives, we had not a single unhappy experience. During our stay we learned the secret of the German *Bauer's* serene self-respect, and acquired our best evidence of the possibilities of really civilized living. We saw a free, unselfconscious, happy childhood; a middle age enjoying a full, joyous and coöperative self-expression; and an old age which had something more than memories on which to subsist.

My first acquaintances in Groszhartau were a retired *Oberjustizrat* (judge), Herr Hasse, and his aged wife. They had never

been farmers: the German rural neighborhood is not one made up exclusively of farmers, and Groszhartau had seventy occupations and professions represented in its population of 1550. The judge had suffered a nervous breakdown before the war and had come to spend his last years in a quiet house at the edge of the village. I had been directed to him by one of his friends in Dresden, and wished him to give me a note of introduction to the *Pächter* (manager) of the *Rittergut*.

I have never received a more friendly welcome to the home of a stranger, and despite my poor German, I have never had more enjoyable visits than the many which I was to have with him. He would not write me a note but insisted that he would accompany me to the home of the *Pächter* and to the old castle where Napoleon had his office during his stay in Saxony and where Groszhartau's only aristocrat, the Prince, lived. Before we left, I was to be allowed the no less pleasant privilege of listening to his radio and victrola and inspecting his garden, his pen of fancy chickens, and even the coffee roaster which he had invented. I accepted with much pleasure Frau Hasse's invitation to return after our visit to the *Rittergut* for a *Kaffeetrinken*.

Herr Hasse was an intimate friend, not only of the *Pächter* and Prince, but of every farmer in the village and of several in nearby villages. He afterward escorted me to the homes of these others, whom he and his dog were accustomed to visit frequently. When the time came for us to leave the village, he clung to my hand and told me that I should not see him again; but I have known no friend for so short a time upon whom I should rather pay another call, or from whom I should rather receive one. Frau Hasse has since died, and his letters have been very sad, but I have

not known a bereaved old lover who was likely to be less lonely than he in the village of Groszhartau.

My next friend was a young farmer, Gerhard Müller, the older son of the *Pächter*. He was one of the best known and most popular young men in the village, a graduate of an agriculture college, and one of the most enthusiastic farmers I have ever met. He loved all growing things, delighted in country life, and was tempted not the slightest by any other profession. He understood what I wanted better than have some sociologists, and gave me more assistance in collecting the data for my study than has any other individual. He voluntarily took the responsibility for helping me to find any information which I required, arranged for my attendance at and participation in every neighborhood activity, and even provided partners for my clumsy dancing. I value his assistance, however, not so much as his friendship and the illustration in his own person of the finest possibilities of cultured and scientific agriculture. If I could account for him, my account would be a greater contribution to the solution of the problem of rural life than all the books ever written on the subject. That account would include a description of a happy, congenial family life, the story of an efficient neighborhood, even the history of Germany.

As Gerhard introduced me to the members of his family, showed me his home from the wine-cellar to his bedroom, took me on a tour of the barnyard, explaining the art and science of manure piling, escorted me through the stables, stopping to gently pull a sucking pig from its mother's teat without objection from the pig or its parent, led me through the fields, proudly showing off a crop of sugar beets or picking up tubers and slicing them in two to call my attention to the virtues of a well-

brought-up potato, I found nothing so interesting as the man himself.

He carried in his pocket a book in which were computed the yields of various crops. He had built his own radio and had got Pittsburgh and Schenectady. He kept the books in his father's office, books in which were recorded, not only the wages of his father's laborers, but the accounts of the cows and hens. He was on as good terms with those laborers as he was with the Prince and the *Oberjustizrat*. He was as much at home in a dress suit, as my guest at the Dresden Opera, as in overalls in the stables of the *Rittergut*. He was as well informed on the subjects of anthropology, German history, and national and international politics as he was on the subject of the advantages of cow dung over commercial *Dungmittel*. He had a variety of interests, including the collection of stamps and coins. On the letter-head of the stationery on which he frequently writes me is printed:

To be German means to be simple and genuine, to desire no pretense at being more than one is, to renounce all deceptive appearances, for the sake of truth and inner integrity. To be German means to value a person according to his inner character.

If that is true, then Gerhard is a true German.

IV

The Terpenning family has never been more aware of its deficiency in polite manners, but never less embarrassed about that deficiency, than on the various occasions of its entertainment in his home. It was on the occasion of such an entertainment, as the guests at a *Rittergut* homecoming, that we first became acquainted with rural children who could meet strangers, even

Ausländer, without embarrassment to themselves or others, and conduct themselves at dinner without a single *faux pas*. I know of no happier habitat for one's first or second childhood, or all that goes between, than a German village.

It is at its best in its recreations. As the whole village is an educational institution, so it is a re-creational institution, and as an individual renews his life by a game or a song, so he renews it by his worship and his work. A German village holiday, of which there are many, is a holy day indeed, and not the least of its holiness is the result of the fact that it is dedicated to the renewal and enlargement of the human spirit in lively and enlivening fun.

I shall give one example of specialized village recreation: the annual *Kirmesfest*, a combination of home-coming and Thanksgiving holiday. The relatives and friends from a distance arrive on Saturday night. On Sunday morning all attend the special church service for adults and children. After service the villagers and their friends return to the homes for feasting and visiting in the family circle. Early on Sunday evening old and young assemble at the *Gasthäuser* (inns) for neighborly visiting, drinking coffee, beer, and lemonade, eating *Kuchen*, dancing, singing, and other amusements. This part of the programme is continued on Monday evening and most of the night.

As I observed and participated in all these activities, I marvelled at three things: the exceptional hospitality toward us who had no claim to it, the villagers' capacity for the enjoyment of simple social intercourse and coöperative fun, and the free and frank self-expression and general good manners of little children as well as of youth and elders. We were made to feel as welcome as the natives. We felt ourselves being drawn into the conversations

even though we were still shaky about *der*, *die*, and *das*. We envied them their ability to sing as only Germans can sing. We should have liked to place a crown of wild olives on the heads of the graceful athletes, *Turner* and *Turnerinnen*, who gave exhibitions of their expert gymnastics.

We laughed by contagion of merriment whether we understood the jokes or not. We took our full share of the dances at fifty *Pfennige* a set. In all the lengthy programme we saw not one bored or bore-some yawner, nor one look or act to which the most fastidious chaperon might object. We saw only joy and the glorious fusing of the *I's* into a solid, satisfying *we*. I needed to observe no more of German social life than this to understand why American soldiers of the Army of Occupation came home saying that they loved their enemies better than their friends.

It was during this *Fest* that I met a personification of the intimate combination of German religion and recreation. As I watched the preacher son-in-law of Herr Hasse teaching my children the game of *Auf und Ab*, and saw their hilarity at the hazards of that homely sport, I could not help recall my childhood horror of the visits of the sanctimonious ecclesiastics who were wont to make pastoral calls at my home, pronounce their platitudes, pray, and patting me on the head, inquire about the progress of my immortal soul. Even the German *Pfarrer*, I found, may have a sense of humor and a childlike fondness for fun. The Sabbath day in a German village is a combination of religion and recreation, and both religion and recreation profit from their intimate association. Nowhere could religion be less hostile to the enjoyment of life.

I attended church regularly. I went to funerals where I saw neighbors give reverent recognition to the loss of one of their

number. I saw them carry him to his grave on their shoulders. I saw them stack his mound with flowers. I watched the ceremonies of their annual *Totensonntag*, during which the neighbors of nearby Kaditz decorated every grave, even those of French soldiers whose only claim to such honor was the fact that they had been prisoners of war in the village in 1870. I called on the pastor of Kaditz three times, and on each occasion found him talking happily with boys and girls who had come to the parsonage to get his help in their preparation for confirmation.

I found the church in that German village a unified and unifying influence in neighborhood living. As I sat at the various services it was perhaps as well that I did not understand the sermons, but I enjoyed the music; I sensed the thoughtful dignity of the congregations in their ceremony; I shared their reverence.

I should not say, however, that the reverence and moral feeling of German villagers are exclusively or even mainly church reverence or morality. I should say rather that the German family and neighborhood naturally generate those ideals and ideas which come to be associated with religion and which constitute the only virtues of Christianity—such ideals and ideas as love and brotherhood and a faith in the possibilities of life and in the nature of things.

I think I never got nearer to the spirit of an ancient German village or of the German people than I did during a short stay at Wesenstein near Groszhartau. I was shown the castle built by Count von Bülow in 1413. It climbs for seven stories up the side of a mountain, and much of it is hewn out of solid rock. The stables are on the seventh story and are in as good repair as when the last charger was led

forth a hundred years ago. There are two underground passages to nearby castles, one to Castle Dolma and the other to Groszedlitz. The old chapel is still the village church, but no other part is now in use. And yet the building is in good repair, and the furniture, pictures and tapestries are kept as they were when the place was occupied by the nobles of the old days. The prison, hollowed out of solid rock with only one small opening to the light through a twenty-five-foot wall would still hold a criminal, but Wesenstein has none to incarcerate. The mighty and heroic deeds are still pictured on the walls of the castle and the old traditions and the ghosts of heroes still cling to the ancient building.

In the village at the castle's feet we were entertained by the proprietor of the *Gasthaus*, who told of his adventures in the World War, talked of the social life in the village, proudly exhibited his small son, asked many questions about America, and discussed his plans for the future.

I am sure that the influence on a neighborhood of such a history makes the people want to worship in the same pews, weep in the same graveyard, laugh at the same jokes, till the same fields, and bring up children in the same houses for a thousand years. It gives them a sense of the continuity of life, an appreciation of their debt to the past and their responsibility to the future. It enlarges their individual lives to the scale of the only larger life we know. It instils in their minds a sense of reverence. Fortunate is that neighborhood which has a worthy history and which symbolizes that history in monuments and ceremony.

The German *Bauer* is an intelligent, thrifty, self-respecting, coöperative, dependable, civilized neighbor. The American peasant—

A PARTY AT MR. K. NAGOYA'S

BY IDWAL JONES

IN REQUITAL for the many kindnesses that K. Nagoya, who performs them as easily as he breathes, had done for several of my friends, to read a speech at his feast would be little enough. So I climbed the slope to his house. It was already dark, because of the hour and the swirling tule fog, through which the lamps glinted like fireflies caught in a wet mop.

San Francisco bay, far below, was a mesh of searchlight beams. The Fleet was in. The cobbled street echoed with crashing laughter and hiccups. Sailors were afoot, prowling in pairs and trios, striking matches to look for wine-shops and other enticements. Whatever stray barrels and cases they collided against, they hurtled down the steep slope to explode at the bottom like shells. It was a cannonry that augured a rough night.

After a year it was pleasant to me to find all unchanged, with the dangling sign above the entrance, "Nippon's Frame Shop," and the two cypresses, gnarled, stunted and venerable in their painted tubs. They were Nagoya's family trees, and for three hundred years they had taken the wind and the rain; first on a hill behind Kyoto, and now on a back street in San Francisco. Their tiny cones were green in the balminess of June.

I pushed open the door and waded into an atmosphere thick with smells of varnish, shavings, modelling wax and turpentine. The eyes of the old frame-maker were gleaming under the dome of

his skull, luminous behind the counter. Under a bluish globe, it seemed as smooth and ageless as the moon.

"Ah, you have come back in time," he shouted. "There is a studio empty; your old one. Where did you go?"

"Only up into the Sierras."

"Whiskey Hill, Jimtown, Quartz—ah, I know them," he sighed. "The airs there are delicious. If you go up again, you will bring me a handful of good mountain earth for my little cypresses. Yes?"

He spoke some words toward the rear. A young Japanese came out, to make four polite bows, closing up and re-opening swiftly, like a jack-knife.

"Tonight we have a party," said Mr. Nagoya, rubbing his hands and smiling. "A little rice wine, some talks and music. Also friends who will orate in excellent English. But first, you will need a rest."

I followed my grips as they barked the legs of the young Japanese, who wrestled with his burden up three flights of stairs. My host kept up his genial remarks, bowing and talking to himself in the vague shadows.

The room was exactly as I had left it. In one corner was a ponderous, high easel that would have done for a guillotine. A tapestry, threadbare, so ancient that it was but woof sprinkled with tinsel, hung from the ceiling and almost made a suite of the room. The window was open, and the fog seeped in, edged with the odor of roots from the marshy delta of the San

Joaquin. The cable-cars, mounting skyward, swung round the corner with bell-smiting and the gondolier shout of the gripman. As each clanged past, curlews rose, and seagulls, to wheel in spirals and utter their bleak cries.

The damp-stains on the walls were darker, and more rugged in contour, with bold promontories, like Scandinavia. The cot all but collapsed when I hurled myself upon it. Directly overhead, a rain splotch had been outlined with charcoal lashed to a mahl-stick. Thereby, a nude of the franker school, with the opulencies of a cart-horse, had been preserved for posterity. It had the magisterial touch.

The young Japanese returned, after a delicate knock. He carried a bottle of *sake*, a cup and a fistful of cigars.

"Mr. Nagoya," he said, "Mr. Nagoya begs you will descend in three-quarters of an hour. Meanwhile —"

He poured out some *sake*, we drank in turn, and then ignited cigars. Crosslegged on the chair, he talked with candor and ease. Though when Mr. Nagoya's basso echoed somewhat louder than usual, he let fall his eyelids with an apologetic smile. That last crumple of sound had, I thought, the inflection of a ditty.

"Who is he speaking to now?"

"Timconnolly."

"That was before my time."

"Oh, yes. He was a policeman that Mr. Nagoya respected at the theatre forty years ago. They used to drink steam beer after the show, when Mr. Nagoya had finished sweeping out. Timconnolly could drink a whole barrel of beer."

He held up his finger, and listened.

"Now it is Mr. Tanaka. He was the director of the salt-beds at Ogasawara Islands. Then sometimes it is Bottlecelli he is talking to, the great painter who lived down the hall."

The young man rose at a shout, and left. He was gone before I could ask where Bottlecelli was now. Perhaps that notable artist could no longer put up with the leaks in his roof and having to paint and sleep under a shifted umbrella. It was also probable that, after he had moved, his art had exacted martyrdom of him, and he had perished for lack of nutriment.

Pomfret—that was really his name—wore clean linen, his manners were distinguished, and there were few politer men on this revolving globe. But no one on it except Mr. Nagoya thought him a great landscape painter, which Nagoya did to the extent of buying one of his masterpieces a month. It was the same clump of eucalypti and a poppy-covered hill, reminding you of spilt mustard, and repeated a hundred times like one false note eternally thumped on the piano. What he excelled in was bas-reliefs. He took ordinary wine bottles and wrought on them pagan scenes, fauns, satyrs and nymphs done in colored sealing-wax. These he could hawk, though furtively and in bitterness of soul, with more profit than he could landscapes.

The money kept him in cheeses, one red cannonball a month. Pomfret triumphed in rarebit. He shone with immense lustre at soirees that wound up with his making, hemmed in by ecstatic elderly ladies, a rarebit over blue flames of alcohol. It was weird to think of him dining out in some parlor, with maroon plush, ormolu clocks, rubber plants, and with the same spinsters, on rarebit three times a week. But his genius for the social world demanded this outlet.

Once he prepared a rarebit downstairs. The evening was less than a success. Nagoya kept to his bed for three days afterward, until the agonies in his gastric region had diminished. That red cannon-

ball had its fascination. To us it ranked in splendor with the symbol of the Medici. We got to be very proud of Pomfret. He kept the cheese loose under his cot. If you heard a scraping and saw Pomfret, in his silk hat, fishing about on hands and knees with his walking-stick, you knew that he and the symbol, nicely wrapped up in a towel, were going out into the fashionable world, with Nagoya bowing him into the street.

An occult disaster befell me. I discovered that I was sharing my room in wedlock with a fiend unseen and unheard. I could think of no other explanation. Every time I opened the lower drawer of the bureau I found among my collars a handful of cheese rinds. The prank kept up for a month.

Nagoya changed the lock. That helped not at all. So night after night he patrolled the corridor, thumping with his stick, or going softly in felt shoes to apply his eye to the keyhole and see if the fiend were visible.

"He must come in when he is sure the house is asleep," I complained. "No doubt he has a master-key.

"I shouldn't be surprised," I added, "if it were a ghost."

Nagoya paled slightly at this. A tremor ran through him. It is well known that ghosts, if Japanese, are of heart-shaking aspect. They have no features nor hair. They have faces like eggs. Worse, whoever has the mishap to view such a dismal ovoid must say good-bye to his relatives and fold up his belongings, for he has less than three days to live.

"A ghost," he squeaked, mournfully.

Then he banged on the counter, and vowed to see the thing through to the last drop of blood.

That night, after I had retired, Nagoya prepared an ambush in my room.

Wrapped in his best kimono, he sat on a chair placed behind the hanging tapestry. He declined the solace of cognac and cigarettes, and camped there rigidly in the semi-darkness. The moonlight flowed over his skull, his half-hooded eyes, the silk drapery, and his taut hands pressing a club upon his knees. He had even given up breathing. Except for the faint swaying at each systole of the heart, he might have been cataleptic. Ghost or no ghost, this old warrior would not fall short in the least of the requirements of Bushido.

It was difficult to sleep with so much full ceremony near, but I did drowse off.

What roused me was a howl of fury, then a smacking on cloth. Nagoya was laying about him with the club. He dropped it and wrestled with the tapestry, which fell down upon him, so that he rolled on the floor, struggling with the invisible under covers.

He sat up in a paroxysm of laughter as I turned on the light. He waved an arm helplessly, as if the joke were too much, and he wanted it to stop. He was clutching a rat. On the floor was another rind of Botticelli's red cheese. Still gasping with mirth, he pointed to a hole in the ceiling, right above where the tapestry had been caught.

"So that was the ghost—hah?"

He released it out of the window, then hung over to watch its flight over the roof-tops, uttering loud remarks on its bewilderment. Half the neighborhood must have been awake by this time. Nagoya sank to the floor, still weak from mirth and the strain of exorcism, to burn tobacco and drink cognac as he revolved the exploit in his mind. And night being the same as day to him, there he sat, quivering, until the cable began to whirr and the first car banged out its carillon to announce that morning had come.

II

Urbane sounds lifted from the garden. Lanterns were strung on wires from the four ginkgo trees, and in the luminous square cut out of the fog, the guests were moving, stiff and ceremonial in their best clothes.

The back of the house was its real façade. With bay window, colored fan-lights and turret, it bulged with Early Cleveland grandiosity into a lawn that was a miniature Versailles. In the middle of the green was an impressive, white-washed iron deer. I found my way into the latticed shed where Nagoya liked to smoke and admire his plants.

Just now, being the host, he had with propriety secluded himself in the house.

The women, in silks of exquisite pattern, stood in a ring about the goldfish pool. A heavy sowing of top-hats, perhaps a couple of sizes too large, rested on the ears of the male guests. The older men stood, whispering, under a tree; the others, impressed by the austerity of the occasion, tendered themselves up and down correctly, with smiles composed under their toothbrush moustaches.

A tiny white face poked into the shed. It was a *musme*, no bigger than a doll. She fumbled in her *obi* and held out a cigar.

"Mr. Nagoya, he wishes to know if you are comfortable?"

She piped dulcetly, then curtsied into her silks.

"My thanks to him. There is nothing left to desire."

Another curtsy, and she vanished altogether. The shed offered far more comfort than did the house. It was packed with shovels, buckets, brooms and empty sacks; and the seat, a converted tar barrel, was cushioned with old coats. I think

Nagoya contrived this janitorial paradise to remind him of days that, even if humble, were agreeable in the extreme.

It was in the last year of the Civil War that he had come to San Francisco, as a deck-hand on a tea ship. His loyalty was not riveted to the ship, the ocean had disagreed with him, so he decamped at once and made for the open country. His intention was never to see the ocean again, to tramp over vast tracts of solid ground, and not see the same sunset twice. Just below the road he saw a group of workmen raking on the shore of the bay. Was it wheelks they were searching for, or ambergris? He found that they were working a salt bed. The foreman gave him a shovel. Unaware of the English for no, Nagoya took it, and then began his salty toil of five years. At the end of that time, having drawn \$4—eight yen—a day, he was rich.

He returned home to drink *sake* and parade the Ginza of Tokio in a beaver hat. Meanwhile, the salt beds on the island of Ogasawara were opened, and Nagoya—whose fame had reached the ears of the director—was convoyed over to show them how to purify salt in the California manner.

Being a foreign expert, the honor paid him was great. Yen loaded down his pockets. Garbed in white duck, aloof, and pulled about in a special ricksha, he tried to enjoy it, but it was little use, for nostalgia was heavy upon him. He missed the tonic air, the fog, the bread, the cable-cars of San Francisco. Steam beer, and he thought often of this with regret, agreed with him better than all but the finest sake.

His aged father suddenly died, leaving to him a tub full of ancestral trees. Nagoya crated them, bought a ticket and sailed at once for the Coast.

Back in California, he got a job at a vaudeville house, sweeping out after the show, with all doors and windows open to allow the escape of the fumes of cigar and whiskey. This was his morning chore. In the evening he trudged to school, to cipher and draw sustenance from McGuffey's First Reader. This treatise reminded him of the sea, in that while a child might wade in it, philosophers and elephants might drown in it. Nagoya studied it profoundly for six years.

Times were not flush. He was not recompensed with wages. Why did he stay on? The music, perhaps; the luxury of sleeping on velvet curtains back-stage, small delights like feeding the Trained Borneo Birds, and the courtesy of admission to the wings of neighboring theatres. Frequently he heard Edwin Forrest in "Othello," and once walked with the limping, shag-maned immortal to the ferry, carrying his carpet-bag for him.

But drama was not always heavy and subterranean. There were the German comedians. Their vocables imparted something Teutonic to Nagoya's diction; but because of his coaching in McGuffey, it lingered on only as a flavor, as if he had matriculated at Heidelberg.

Then came a new manager, who drank less and could keep accounts.

"What are you getting?" he rumbled. "I can't find out."

"In coin, nothing."

"How long have you been here?"

"Five, six years."

The manager leaned back in his chair for three minutes, stupefied. Then he wrote out a check in payment of six years of sweeping.

"You're a fool, of course. A fool! D'you hear that?"

"I hear."

"Ordinarily, I don't want a fool around.

A person had ought to be a little bit smarter. From now on, you get paid! D'you get that?"

It was Nagoya's turn to be stupefied. His fealty to the theatre had been sordidly appraised in dollars and cents. The glamour of back-stage was gone, destroyed. He left in grief. His time, thenceforth, he devoted wholly, instead of in part, to odd jobs. The first "Japanese schoolboy" in San Francisco, he plied his calling with notable distinction, going from house to house with pail, mop, dusters and the battered McGuffey. After a while he was enabled to buy this house.

III

The Japanese youth ushered us all from the garden into the dining-room. Nagoya, in a grey silk kimono, with Gladstone collar and Ascot tie, sat patriarchal at the head of the table. We were forty guests, in spike coats or high coiffures.

We dined on custard, with small knotted eels in it; shrimp pudding with horse radish, rice cakes and stewed kumquats. There was whiskey, there was beer, there was gin. At each filling, Nagoya lifted high his glass with ceremony. The oldest man in the colony, he had a duty to fulfil, that of raising the collective spirit to a plane of grandeur.

With difficulty, he got to his feet.

"Tonight," he began, "tonight we esteem Mr. Lafcadio Hearn. This is his birthday. He, regrettably, is not alive. But here—here"—with great delicacy touching the region of his heart—"here he does live."

We applauded and followed his example of drinking more wine. Then he waved to the *musme*, who was hanging on our chairs little stockings filled with sweets, nuts, tops and tin whistles. She

blushed, withdrew from her *obi* a roll of paper tied with ribbon.

"My granddaughter, she also esteems Mr. Hearn. She is majoring in English at the Commercial High-school, and she will read a piece to you."

In the middle of the reading, the perturbed face of a tenant painter appeared at the doorway. It was fixed upon me. As soon as the girl had finished her piece, I slipped out.

"Did you know that the trees are gone?" he whispered. "I went out to get something at the store"—he waved a can of milk—"and when I came back the holy tubs weren't there."

He leaned feebly against the wall. A calamity of the first dimensions had fallen upon the house.

"It must be those sailors," he said. "I thought I did hear a particular row a few minutes ago."

We hurried out, looked at the horrid vacancy in the shop entrance. We snapped lighters and searched all the doorways to the bottom of the slope, then peered over the fence into the dark below the precipice. Murder had been done. Three hundred years of arboriculture had vanished in a twinkling. Nagoya had withstood in his eight decades many blows of fate, but this thrust would be fatal.

Two drunken sailors were being huddled into a taxi. The criminals, no doubt. A policeman strolled off, swinging his club, into another shadow. The world was a tragic, black void. We toiled up the slope. The artist, with sombre tread, mounted the stairs, and I returned to the table. The women were gone, and the elders, with eyelids fallen, were in communion with the gin.

Nagoya had begun another speech. He talked like chain lightning, jerkily, with abrupt bows. He made bows to General

Grant in a shabby, gold frame. He made bows to a chromo of President McKinley, which embellished a shotgun ammunition calendar, and bowed no lower to the Mikado. At intervals, he thumped himself on the chest.

Exactly what was there, no one knew but himself. He waved at his ikons, and roared steadily, as if the joggled-up kaleidoscope of his experiences was turning in his mind, and he had to describe it.

Three of the elders, more than a little drunk, had gone into the garden. They were breathing the cool air and leaning against the iron deer, with heads thrown back and beer bottles to their lips.

Nagoya turned on an electric fan, and instantly the room was filled with agreeable sounds. Depending from the ceiling, at the end of a gilded chain, was a chandelier with long, crystal ornaments. The breeze impinged on them, so that they emitted tinklings, ghostly and musical. It was thus, curled up on his Louis XIV *chaise-longue*, with hands folded on his paunch, that he entertained friends and relatives on select occasions.

"Music is very charming," he shouted at me. "Now we shall have some more. You and me. Everybody else is drunk."

He placed on the table a pedestal from which sprouted a branch, and upon it a mechanical bird with real feathers. He poked a cent into a slot, and the bird trilled "Over the Garden Wall." Nagoya hovered yearningly over it, with an expression of rapt joy. After the handful of copper was gone, he sighed.

We shook hands. The elders departed noisily, arm in arm. I climbed the stairs gelid with horror. I was not going to stay, for the catastrophe was one for Nagoya to face alone. A half hour later, I was outside, looking at the dark house from across the road.

IV

Of a sudden, the shop burst with light. Nagoya emerged, and after a glance up and down the walk, lifted his hands as if to test the early morning air. A distillation of fog dropped gently in the thinnest of spray that left a spectral mist on the window.

He reëntered, and with an immense shrieking of tiny, un-oiled wheels trundled out two bulky objects. The ancestral

trees! And so they had been inside all the while. To be shielded, no doubt, from any prank on the part of the Navy.

Leaning against the door jamb, he puffed a final cigarette, leisurely. The party had been long and successful. He felt the air again, and whistled. The moisture would be very good for the plants. The door slammed and the light went out. I moved on, for the first, faint whirring of the cable reminded me that morning was nearly come.

LIFE AND DEATH OF A COAL-MINER

BY JACK CONROY

THE floor of Koch's butcher-shop was covered with a thick layer of sawdust which felt cool to my bare feet after the burning pavement outside. There were barrels of piccalilli and sauerkraut with mosquito netting over them to keep the flies out. When Koch came staggering out of his immense ice-box with a quarter of beef and threw it down on the block, the flies rallied. They settled on his hairy arms and on the meat. He slashed at an insistent blue-bottle with a cleaver. "Want to blow skippers in the meat, *Schweinehund*?" he cried angrily.

Koch waited on everybody else before he turned to me.

"I want a five cent soup bone," I said, timidly.

Koch picked up a blue-knuckled bone and sniffed it. He always sold the best meat to cash customers, and the next best to good paying credit customers. Whatever was left went to those like us, who had run up a big bill during the strike.

"Your papa's gone back to work, ain't he? Ain't the strike at the Monkey Nest mine settled?" Koch inquired as he wrapped up the bone.

"Yes, sir, he has gone back to work."

Koch knew as well as everybody else that the strike was over. But I knew what he was really driving at.

"Well, you tell him to come in and see me Saturday night. Don't forget it, now."

"No, sir, I sure won't. I'll tell him the very first thing."

Father looked worried when I told him what Koch had said.

"It's hard to get the bills paid up between strikes," he said despondently.

Fred Dodson, who owned the house we lived in, drove down the lane that evening and hitched his horse to a fence-post. He greeted our fawning collie with such excessive geniality that my father was immediately struck with misgiving.

"Hullo, Tom," said Fred. "Y'all well?"

He tweaked a timothy stalk from beside the door step and began chewing it, at the same time wooling the collie's head and repeating: "Good ol' boy! Good ol' boy!"

"Very well," Father answered. "How's all your folks, Fred?"

"Tol'able, jist tol'able! Nothin' to brag on. Leona's been doctorin' all Winter, but she don't seem t'git her stren'th back like she'd oughter."

This was before operations were so fashionable. At that time professional invalids took a melancholy pride in their ability to remain bedfast for amazing periods.

"A person don't know how to appreciate health till he loses it," Father said abstractedly, his thoughts elsewhere. He was mentally framing his reply to what he knew was forthcoming.

"Leona's sick spell cost me a mint. I jist been tryin' t' c'lect in a few bills, here and there, and thought maybe—bein' as you're workin' agin—you might maybe be able to let me have a little on the rent."

"You've been mighty obliging to me, Fred, and I appreciate it," said Father slowly. "I haven't drawn a pay yet, but when I do, you'll get something. Just now, it's a question of paying as much as I can in as many places as I can with devilish little to do it with."

"I knowed it! I knowed it!" exclaimed Fred heartily. "I was tellin' Leona this mornin' that you was one man I could bank on. Well, y'all come over an' spend the day some day."

After Fred left, Father sat for a long time on the back door step. He drew caricatures on the packed earth of the walk with a twig, and the next morning we saw that he had also been writing down figures and adding them up.

II

The miners who passed my sister and me at the pithead as we waited for Father to come up often stopped to give us something out of their lunch-pails. An apple or an orange was all right, but a sandwich, pie or cake was always soggy and tainted with a sulphurous taste. Not many of the miners could afford bananas or oranges, and if they could, they were apt to eat them themselves. We always accepted the gifts with polite thanks, but as soon as the donor was out of sight we gave the food to our collie. He usually buried it somewhere near, growling fiercely at anything that came close, but we never saw him dig up any of his cached provisions.

Mike Riordan would come lurching along on his peg leg. He was an ex-sailor, and he said a shark had bitten his leg off while he was diving for pearls in the South Seas. He unstrapped his peg when he was working at the face of the coal; he'd sink down on his knee and the stump of the other leg and pick away tirelessly all day

long. There were few miners who could load as many cars as he. When the weather was bad, he'd say the lost leg was itching and then he would scratch in the air about where the missing toes should be. Mike never failed to grab up my sister and carry her off under his arm.

"I've got a cellar full o' fat rats, and they're gettin' hungry," he'd growl ferociously. "I'll t'row ye in wid me rats!"

I howled in spurious fright, and sister bellowed: "Please, please, Mister Riordan, I'll be good!" At the same time she was with cool calculation aiming kicks at Mike's legs. He would carry her for a few yards, and then set her down. He stood chuckling as she ran back; the zest of the joke was never diluted for him.

Mike's arms were covered with tattooing. There were stars and anchors and serpents, but the most fascinating piece showed a naked woman. When there was nobody but boys or men about, Mike would move the muscles on his arm in a way to make the woman's hips wriggle. As accompaniment, he hummed an air he had picked up on the streets of Cairo at the World's Fair, and on occasion he would sing these words to the tune:

Oh, what a funny feelin'!
Stepped on a banana peelin';
Heels flew up and hit the ceilin'.

When we told Mother about this, she was angry and said we must not look when Mike did such things. She waited for him one night and gave him a good talking-to. He said he was sorry, and after that he'd make the woman dance only when there were no small boys around.

Sometimes the mine cage brought up a wiry, vicious pit burro or two. They were battered and raw in many places where the drivers had beaten them or singed them with torches to accelerate their speed. They

were galled from the friction of trace chains, and their eyes had a cloudy look about them. Day in and day out they pulled strings of cars along narrow gauge tracks in the depths of the pit, and when they came to the surface they were blind, even on a day when the sun was not shining. They stumbled uncertainly about their lot near the dump or stood humped and disconsolate until it was time to take them below again.

They were brought up only on rare occasions, and for what reason we could never determine. Perhaps the Humane Society was enforcing a law that the mules must spend a certain amount of time above the ground, just as city social workers insist that tubercular sweatshop hands shall have a two-day vacation in the fresh country air every year. The burros squealed and kicked one another as swarms of flies gnawed at their raw flesh; they bared their teeth and bit desperately when shuddering their hides failed to displace their tormentors. The pasture lot was covered with soapstone and burning slag; nothing green ever sprang up in it. Even the hardy white oak scrub was blasted when the acrid soapstone spread about its roots.

One of us would grab Father's dinner-pail and empty out the brackish water in the lower deck; the pail always reeked with the sulphurous stench of the mine, which clings to clothing, hair and skin as well. We trotted along beside Father, one carrying the pail and clinging to an arm, the other grasping the other arm. Father ordinarily told us all that had happened in the mine during the day, but since Koch had sent his message and Dodson had stopped at the house to hint for the back rent, he hadn't had much to say. Miner's asthma—which no one who works underground for any length of time escapes—was beginning to plague him more and

more. He wheezed painfully before we were half way home. Sometimes, when the air was heavy, he would be obliged to sit down to blow for a spell.

Coal haulers drove their creaking wagons past our house. In muddy weather portions of the road were sheeted with roily water and teamsters who had not been that way for a time descended from their wagons and plumbed the holes with a shovel handle or the butt of a whip. They had to double teams to pull through the worst chug-holes and even then the wagons might sink to the hubs and the spokes splinter under the weight.

The horses lathered and steamed, fluttering their nostrils. They became unruly, and see-sawed back and forth instead of pulling steadily and in unison. Then the cursing drivers set their shoulders against the endgates and shouted themselves hoarse as they added their own strength to that of the horses. With hickory poles for levers, they pried the wheels out of deep holes and poked the clay from between the spokes.

Father always used to run out to help the teamsters, but finally he got so that he didn't seem to notice them, though he was looking right at them. Most of the time he sat beneath the catalpa tree in the front yard, leaning his chair against the trunk, his head slumped upon his breast. But when one of the exasperated drivers would inquire whether he was crippled, he'd arouse with a start and climb over the barb-wire fence to put his shoulder to a wheel or to throw his weight on a pry pole. As the garden grew, he spent more of his spare time in it, hoeing, pulling weeds, and killing potato bugs and cabbage worms.

One morning a young aunt came to take me to the home of a miner who had been crushed by a fall of rock at the Monkey Nest mine. It was thought that

the sight of a dead man might serve to counteract my excess of youthful spirits, for in those days joy was invariably associated with the Devil, and a lugubrious manner and countenance were esteemed as hallmarks of sanctity. Though I had no desire to see the dead man, I was not a bit averse to the trip thither, for the day promised to be glorious. The wild plum thickets along the lane were carpeting the ground beneath with their petals. As we cut through a clover field, bees trafficked busily in the blossoms underfoot, and I trod warily with my bare feet, for I had once been stung on the ankle by a bumble-bee.

The collie scared up a quail and it ran limping and fluttering away with the dog barking excitedly after it. Then I knew that the bird's nest was near; and that as soon as the dog had been decoyed far enough away, the quail would rise up and fly back. I found the nest burrowed in the ground, and it was full of eggs. For a moment my aunt was smiling as she knelt to look, but the realization of her grim mission brought her back to her feet, and she pressed resolutely on, telling me to hurry.

We waded knee deep in lush grass on which the dew had dried only at the top; we passed through a meadow infested with tickle grass and it worked up my pants leg and set my aunt to scratching, too. She pinned up her skirt beneath her arms, but her petticoat was soon drenched and stained green. When we came to a fence, she would look cautiously in all directions to see if anybody were about, then she'd kneel and crawl under as I held up the bottom strand. Her stays were laced so tight that her face reddened every time she stooped over, for an hour-glass waist was the mode then.

The dead man's hovel was jammed with

sorrowful relatives and curious neighbors. A dozen saddle horses and several buggies and spring wagons were hitched in the yard. As we entered the front room, the dazzling sunlight was instantly blotted out and with it my exuberance. For a moment I could see nothing but a dim, shrouded figure reclining upon one of the folding biers that undertakers used. One of the relatives who seemed to be a sort of master of ceremonies came forward and with a dramatic gesture ripped the sheet off the corpse. There he lay like a trussed blue fowl, his feet protruding from beneath a cheap cotton shroud. His scarred hands were folded across his chest; coal dust still blackening his nails and showing between his toes. His lips were glued in a hideous grin. I wailed in fright and attempted to retreat to the outdoors, but my aunt was not to be diverted from her purpose and what she considered her Christian duty.

"Touch his face!" she cried sternly.

She seized my hand and planted it on the dead man's forehead. Revulsion overwhelmed me—I snatched my hand away as though the dead flesh were burning instead of icy. I grew faint and felt as though I must retch.

For days the dead man's face appeared before me every time I closed my eyes. I awoke in the night a-sweat with terror, fancying my hand was still on his brow and that the curious paralysis which often affects one in dreams would not allow me to withdraw it. There was a mouse between the walls in the room where I slept and I could hear his sharp teeth nibbling, nibbling, and bits of plaster and lath falling. My imagination transformed the mouse into a dead man scratching with long finger nails at the lid of his coffin. I recalled gruesome anecdotes of people buried alive and how, when they were

unearthed later, it was found that they had turned over on their faces in the casket, fighting for breath, and had wrenched handsfull of hair from their heads.

III

"It's all I can do, and I must do it," Father said to Mother one day. "I could tend the garden in the morning, go to work at noon and dig till four, then fire the shots. Four dollars extra on the day will soon pay up our debts. The way it is now, we're like the frog in the well. Every time he jumped up one foot, he slipped back two. We might figure ourselves to Hell, but never to the top of the ground."

Mother protested that shot firing was a single man's job, and that nobody ever lasted long at it. Shot firers were paid a premium rate for an hour or two of work after the other men had finished. When a man accepted the job, it was considered that his days were numbered—that the Angel of Death had already checked his name on the waiting list.

But Father was obdurate. After a great deal of indecision, he had found what appeared to be a way out. He said he would be very careful; moreover, Mike Riordan, the one-legged sailor, would be his partner, and Mike was an old hand who had fired shots unscathed in the days when miners still used sulphur squibs. The squibs were like Fourth of July nigger-chasers. When a match was touched to one end, the squib began to fizz and back up. They were placed in small copper tubes tamped in drill holes containing a charge of powder. One end of the tube extended into a paper cartridge filled with powder; the other projected from the drill hole, and into this end of the tube the squib was placed and lighted. Then the shot firer had to heel it pretty lively to dodge the flying chunks

of coal, for it didn't take the squib long to reach the powder.

Presently the slower safety fuse was invented. Miners were compelled by law to leave four feet of this fuse protruding from the drill hole, and it burned slowly, allowing the firer ample time to leave the room. This did not eliminate accidents, however. Shots frequently blew through into adjoining rooms; rocks were loosened and fell; there were dust explosions.

The miners fashioned their powder cartridges from newspapers by rolling a sheet tightly about a section of smooth pipe. Then the edges were glued with laundry soap and the cigarette-like cylinder crimped at one end and filled with coarse grained blasting powder. Sometimes, when a heavy charge was required, several of these cartridges were pushed with the tamping rod to the back end of the drill hole, the last cartridge having a fuse end tucked into it. Several cartridges filled with drill dust were then tamped in around the fuse, the end of the fuse was split so the shot firers could light it readily, and the shot was ready.

Mike lived alone in one of the camp-houses clustering at the foot of the hill on which our slightly more pretentious house stood. None of the girls thereabout would have anything to do with him, for it was said that he had the evil eye and had been heard talking to the Devil in his shanty at night. Also, the girls didn't like the idea of a one-legged beau, and Mike was past middle-age. The girls jeered at him and called him Peggy. If a child fell suddenly and unaccountably ill or a man was hurt in the mine, Mike's evil eye was blamed.

We frequently went to visit him in the evening after he came home from work. If there were any rats in his cellar, they must have had webbed feet, for the place was always full of foul smelling water. We

crept down the rotting steps at the side of the house and watched the mosquito larvæ wriggling about in the water, and there was a frog that perched on a floating shingle and became so tame that he would not dive off with a splash, but sit and watch us solemnly, his whitish underthroat throbbing like a beating heart. Mosquitoes in dense clouds swarmed about Mike's shack; he burned rags to keep them away. The company doctor was always wondering why he did not die of malaria, for he lived over a pool of stagnant water. Mike always replied that one born to be hanged would never perish otherwise.

He never mentioned his rats or tried to scare us when we went to see him. He would descend the cellar steps, roll up his sleeves, grope about in the black water, and fish out a bottle of beer. Before the Fourth of July or a Miners' Union picnic, he would have a keg of beer floating in the cellar. I didn't like the beer at first, but after a while I begged Mike for more than he would give me. After he had drunk three or four bottles, he would begin to curse the English and extol the military and cultural glories of Erin. Presently—in a more jocular mood—he'd dance a horn-pipe as best he could, his peg sinking in the earth when he stamped too vigorously. He stumbled and fell, but scrambled up merrily, laughing and jigging away fit to kill. He explained that age was stiffening his joints, and that he'd have to catch some fishing worms and put them in a bottle to melt in the sun. He said that all the circus acrobats used fishing worm oil to lubricate their joints.

At first Mike would sing a merry ditty such as:

In Ireland they have buttermilk ninety
days old.
The maggots and wiggle-tails get very
bold.

It would put any man in the greatest surprise
To see them turn up their great goggle
eyes.

But as dusk thickened and lamps began to twinkle in window panes, he'd grow mellow and shift to reminiscences of his old Irish mother and the peat bogs of Erin and the River Shannon. His tongue thickened and his words blurred. He mumbled a sentimental ballad which all the miners knew, and our childish trebles joined in the chorus:

Down in the coal mines underneath the
ground,
Where a gleam of sunshine never can be
found;
Digging dusky diamonds all the seasons
round,
Down in the coal mines underneath the
ground.

For us Mike held the irresistible attraction of the devilish and *verboten*. How he could spin glamorous tales of far horizons! He told us how to induce a monkey to throw down cocoanuts by thumbing one's nose at them, of savages whose lips had been artificially distended to form duck-like bills, of deserted jewel-studded temples reclaimed by the jungle and forgotten by man.

We sat entranced till the stars began blossoming, and his voice became more incoherent and drowsy, fading as thin as a worn-out phonograph record. His head dropped forward and the rising moon silvered his hair. A snore told us that the story telling was ended for that night.

Father made so much firing shots that he soon had all the bills paid up. Getting a large sum for back rent pleased the landlord, and he put up some screens to the doors. Screens were almost unheard of on miner's houses at that time; they were considered luxuries for the rich only. Flies

usually buzzed around the tables as though they owned the place, and one of the family had to stand guard at mealtime, slowly waving a leafy wand of alder or buck brush over the victuals. But the flies soon got used to this and settled tenaciously on everything that tempted their appetites.

Father was paying Koch every Saturday night, and he brought home a striped bag full of hard stick candy as a treat. It was a gala event and we always waited up far past our habitual bedtime. The candy was vile, unpalatable stuff, no doubt, but we relished it keenly, licking a stick with the air of a connoisseur sampling a rare vintage, and then laying it aside for future consideration. Sugar was a precious item in our diet, and in lean times sorghum might be used for sweetening coffee. At other times both the coffee and the sorghum were lacking.

Father arose at six and labored diligently in the garden till noon. He was proud of the garden. He fought potato bugs and cut worms and slashed weeds. When the ground was dry, he'd scan every floating cloud before he descended into the mine at noon and hope that it might be raining pitchforks when he came up again. Weather never intruded in the mine—the miners left the upper world behind for the period they were below.

The shot firers calculated their route so as to avoid the powder fumes and smoke which powerful fans drove along the entries. They left the mine by climbing up an airshaft ascending from the end of the main entry leading from the shaft bottom. Father and Mike ran from room to room, touching their lamps to the fuses and pausing a moment until the end hissed and sparkled to be sure that it was really lighted. They shouted "Fire in the hole!" to one another as they lighted each shot. The steel cap on Mike's peg knocked fire

from the rails and sometimes he struck a soft place and sank to the stub of his leg, where he had the vacant pants leg folded as a pad. The stub was tender on the end, and when Mike struck it on a rock he'd swear luridly. Some of the men were afraid to curse while in the mine, but Mike never was.

The air shaft had a shed above it with a door which was always sucked tightly shut by the inrush of air. We laid our ears to the cracks between the rough planks and listened to the dull booming of the exploding shots. They vibrated the earth. Then we could hear the sharp click of Mike's peg as he and Father neared the top of the spiral stairs, though the incessant roaring of the air current inside drowned most sounds. Sometimes we contrived, by exerting our combined strength, to pry open the door. We peered fearfully within, clinging to the jamb. The boarded walls sweated icy globules of sulphurous water, and flabby white toadstools reared from crevices. When we sighted the flare of the lard-oil lamps or heard Mike's peg hitting the steps, we withdrew and shut the door, for we had been ordered never to venture inside the shed.

IV

One night we waited at the air shaft a long time but nobody came up. We heard a few shots going off, and then nothing. We pried open the door and I descended cautiously a step or two, but the steps were treacherous with slime and the roaring darkness of the nether regions terrified me. As I retreated, the whistle at the tipple began blowing. It never paused—its level, piercing blast echoing among the hills. We knew something was wrong and set out for the shaft. Before we arrived, the whistle had ceased.

At the pithead a group of men and women had gathered. Mike was lying near the engine-house on a folded stretcher, his face covered with blood and his peg leg shattered. Mother was standing silently near. She was afraid to ask any questions, but she was hoping that somebody would tell her something. Six or seven miners' wives surrounded her and led her back home, for the rescue party below had signalled to the engineer to hoist. They had arranged beforehand to blow three blasts if it were better for Mother not to see. Mother walked along quietly. She had inherited the stoicism of a long line of miners; fainting and hysterics are practically unknown among the women of the mining camps.

Father was found crumpled under a huge lump of coal with another chunk imbedded in his side, but he was still alive. His right eye was gone. The rescuers would tell that a shot had blown through from the adjoining room. The intervening wall had been too thin. But it was after Mike was able to talk coherently that the full story was learned.

Mike had come to a wet hole on his rounds—a hole drilled but not loaded with powder or tamped. Whenever a miner drilled a hole into which he thought might seep enough dampness to prevent the powder from igniting, he prepared the cartridges and fuse and laid them near the hole, leaving a sign indicating that the shot firer was expected to load and tamp the shot and fire it instantly while the powder was still dry. It took five minutes or more to prepare the shot, and Father came in to help Mike.

As Mike lit the shot and turned to go, he stepped in a boggy spot and his peg plunged down in it. Father helped him to his feet, but he had sprained his ankle and could not walk. Behind them, the ignited

fuse was hissing and burning toward the powder. However, only the loose end outside the hole was as yet burning, and Father cut it off close to the coal. But as he prepared to help Mike outside, the wall of the room leaped toward them with a terrific detonation. Ordinarily, the shot in the next room would not have harmed them, but the shot must have had too much powder in it or it might have been drilled at the wrong angle. The wall between was too thin to withstand the blast.

The lamps were blown out. Mike said he felt flying chips of coal stinging his face like needles, but, luckily, the only large lump that struck him was the one which knocked his peg leg off. He heard Father calling for help, but he could not see him. When he tried to stand, he remembered his sprained ankle. He found that half of his peg was blown away. So he groped on all fours to where Father lay beneath the coal and tried to lift it off him, but he couldn't budge it. He felt around and found a stout mine prop, but even with it he could not move the lump.

Father by this time was silent, and Mike thought he must surely be dead. He followed a rail to the main entry, and his keen sense of direction enabled him to crawl toward the shaft. He could not find his lamp, and a match would not burn in the strong draft. Mike was bleeding badly, and he knew that he must hurry, for the powder fumes were making him dizzy. He held his head close to the ground and pressed doggedly on, rocks and lumps of coal lacerating his palms and knee and the stub of his leg. Red and blue spots were blooming before his eyes when he saw a faint beam of descending light. He knew that he had reached the shaft. He was able to pull the signal cord before he collapsed, and the rescuers found him unconscious with the cord clasped tightly in his hand.

An incessant procession of visitors invaded our house, and relatives we had not seen for years appeared to take charge of everything. "What's the use of havin' kin-folks if they can't he'p you in a time like this?" they'd say. Meals were served continuously, and the pallets of self-invited guests littered the floors. We children roamed about disconsolately, for Mother had taken to her bed and nobody seemed to pay any attention to us—we seemed aliens in the house.

I walked up and down the rows of potatoes in the garden, and noticed that weeds were pushing up here and there and the bugs were coming back. I picked a few off and mashed them between a thumb and finger, but I remembered that that would raise a blister. The bugs were called blister beetles.

Father had been proud of the garden, and I wanted to go in the room where he lay and tell him about it, but the nurse wouldn't let me in. Through the door of his room, I could hear him puffing louder than he ever had with the miners' asthma. I grew discouraged about the garden, for nobody seemed to take any interest in it any more. Cutworms were clipping off the cabbage plants. I went along the rows, and where a plant had wilted down, I would probe in the earth and pull up the roots with the slaty slug coiled about them. I would squash the marauder with savage satisfaction.

The third day after the accident, I became obsessed with the notion that my own sin had been responsible for what had happened. So I built a tabernacle of gunny sacks and poles behind the shed and fashioned an altar from a wooden box. On it I sprinkled "holy water" from the rain barrel under the eaves and burned candles left over from a Christmas tree. I slashed my hand with broken glass and

daubed a bloody cross on the altar. I had an inchoate idea of appeasing an angry God with prayer and sacrifice. But nothing did any good. On the fourth day, Father tried to raise himself in bed, but stiffened out. His hands clenched on the counterpane and could scarcely be pried loose.

V

He lay on a bier in the front parlor for two days, and during this time hundreds filed past, paused, looked at his face, and passed out the front door. Mike Riordan had come every day on crutches asking to see Father, and each time he was refused he swore horribly and went away, vowing never to return. All the women thought he should not be allowed to come even after Father was dead.

Mike's face was speckled with blue lumps of coal under the skin; he would carry them till he died. The miners had taken up a collection to buy him a cork leg. He told us that the leg looked good, all right, and bent at the knee just like a genuine one, but he didn't like it—it didn't feel natural. Besides, he had to wear two shoes. He said that before that he had just waited in the shoe-store till a man with the other leg off came in and they got their heads together and bought only one pair of shoes, each paying half the price and each taking one shoe.

Inside the parlor, relatives and neighbors were gathered—most of them women. They greeted Mike with frigid silence, remembering his indecent language of the last few days. He might be tolerated as a painful act of humanitarianism, but never welcomed. He appeared to sniff the hostility in the atmosphere and halted in the middle of the room, balancing himself with difficulty on his sore ankle and unfamiliar cork leg. He braced himself as

though facing a gale at sea or the roll of a shifting deck. Then he hobbled awkwardly to the casket.

"Goodbye, Tom! Goodbye, you poor old son of a bitch!" he said steadily. Then he turned to his horrified audience. "Goodbye, you sluts! I hope you all miscarry!"

On the day of the funeral somebody was electrified to hear a rapid gasping noise apparently issuing from the coffin. In those days death was considered as assured if a mirror remained unclouded when placed before the lips, and it was said that a pin hole in the flesh of a dead person would not close up again. By these tests, Father was dead. Everybody was rooted to the spot by amazement, when our collie emerged from the curtains hung around the bier. The day was warm, and he had been lying beneath the coffin, panting.

I stood directly in front of the coffin while the funeral was being preached, and I could see Father's nose above the edge. The undertaker had a folding organ and the organist from the Methodist church knew how to make it quaver in a way to make everybody cry. The Methodist choir sang "Jesus, Lover of My Soul." The preacher was thought to be very eloquent, but many were disappointed because he did not choose the verse about "greater love hath no man, than this: that he lay down his life for a friend". Of course, Father had not really laid down his life for Mike, at least not intentionally, but that was a dramatic, soul-stirring text and the disgruntled auditors recalled many strong sermons that had been preached from it.

The stifling scent of hothouse flowers filled the room. The wreaths were banked about the casket; waxy, unearthly petals floated down. Each wreath had a card bearing the name of the donor inscribed with flourishing letters, and tied with ribbon. I heard two or three people say that

they would rather have the flowers while they were alive and could enjoy them. They said it with the air of one voicing a trenchant apothegm for the first time.

The yard was full of carriages hired from the livery stable. The only time the miners used a livery rig was for a funeral or maybe when one of the young bucks got drunk and wanted to cut a dash. The hearse was shiny black with folded curtains carved on its sides. Somebody said that the undertaker didn't know his business, for the hearse should have been grey for a man as old as Father. White for a child, black for the young and middle-aged, grey for the old.

But the carriages soon filled and the hearse pulled out of the yard with the horses stepping high and easy. Mike was leaning on the fence across the way, his crutches propped against a post. We were in the coach reserved for relatives, just behind the hearse. As we passed, Mike's hand was raised as though in salute. His sleeves were rolled up, and the naked woman tattooed on his arm was plainly visible. I thought everybody must be noticing it, but the other occupants of the coach were sitting and sobbing or burying their red noses in handkerchiefs.

At first I thought that Mike was making the woman dance, but I decided it was the heat waves shimmering between, for Mike looked solemn and as I turned to watch him a little longer, I saw that tears were running down his face—or he might have been sweating. The driver of the hearse slapped the horses' backs with the lines and clucked loudly. As we went around a bend in the road I looked back through the diamond-shaped pane in the back of the coach and saw the carriages stretching out of sight. I thought that the funeral procession must be a mile long, or maybe even longer.

THE ARTS AND SCIENCES

Economics

ON THE EFFORT TO STABILIZE THE PURCHASING POWER OF MONEY

BY HOWARD F. BIGELOW

THERE is current at the present time, and has been current for several years, the idea that the purchasing power of money may be measured simply and easily by computing a series of index numbers of prices. Usually it is assumed that the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Index of Wholesale Prices is a satisfactory measure of this purchasing power. The index is computed by an impartial government bureau, includes a wide list of commodities, and yet is simple enough to be kept reasonably up to date. But it is really not an index of the general price level. It indicates only the power of money to command commodities in wholesale quantities and at wholesale prices. It measures only the buying power of business men in the wholesale market.

Consumers, on the other hand, purchase goods at retail, and they include in their budgets many items that are affected only indirectly, and some that are affected not at all, by changes in the wholesale price level. For example, shelter is sold only at retail, and the wholesale prices of building materials have but little influence upon rents. Land values and wages in the building trades, which are not included in the wholesale price index, are much more significant factors in determining shelter costs. Again, professional and personal services are a significant item in living

costs, but they are not measured at all by wholesale prices. Thus if we are ever to select any single index, and make it the basis of stabilizing either dollars or values, it must be, not a wholesale price index, but an index of the general level of prices, including wages, salaries and rents, and retail as well as wholesale commodity prices.

But I am not so sure that I would care to have my purchasing power measured even in terms of such a general price level. I am interested only in the prices of the commodities which I must buy, and not at all in the prices of a lot of things which are not included in my standard of living. As a home owner, my shelter costs are determined, not by current building costs and present day land values, but by housing costs at the time I bought my home. As a typical American consumer I buy very little in the way of direct personal service, so that I am not immediately interested in current wage rates. The cost of servicing my automobile is determined, not on the basis of what the garage manager pays his mechanics, but on the basis of a flat rate of from \$1 to \$1.50 an hour, which includes his estimate of my share of his overhead as well as his mechanics' wages. I have received very little benefit as yet from the cuts in pay which those same mechanics assure me that they have been required to take.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics is well aware of these facts. Because it knows that its Wholesale Price Index is not an adequate index of wage-earners' living costs, it computes another series of index num-

bers designed to measure them more accurately. It obtains prices twice a year, in June and December, in thirty-two cities, for all the commodities entering into the worker's budget. The average price of each article is weighted according to its relative importance in the average family budget, and separate indices are compiled for each of the six main groups of commodities,—food, clothing, shelter, fuel and light, household furnishings, and miscellaneous goods and services. These groups are then weighted according to their relative importance in the typical worker's budget, and are put together into a single cost-of-living index.

But just what does that cost-of-living index really measure? Simply this: the changing cost of a detailed list of commodities which are considered to represent as closely as may be the actual purchases of normal workingmen's families. It is a measure of the changes in the cost of an arbitrarily determined market-basketful of commodities which it is assumed on the basis of careful study would be bought by the typical worker.

What is this market-basket assumed to contain? In its 1918-1919 study the Bureau of Labor Statistics arrived at the conclusion that for the average American workingman, 38.2% of the basket was filled with food, 16.6% with clothing, 13.4% went for shelter, 5.4% for fuel and light, 5.1% for home furnishings, and 21.3% for miscellaneous commodities. It is, then, on the basis of this 1918-1919 market-basket that it has computed the American worker's cost of living from 1914 down to the present time.

Yet even this average market-basket is hardly representative of the actual expenditures of any particular workingman's family. Workers with larger incomes spend their money differently from workers with

smaller incomes. Workers in the Eastern manufacturing centers spend their money differently from workers in cities of the Middle West or the Pacific Coast. This same study showed that families with incomes of less than \$900 in 1918-1919 spent 44% of their income for food, as compared with 34% spent for food in families having an income of \$2500 or more. The lower income group spent 13.2% for clothing as compared with 20% for the higher, 14.5% for rent as compared with 10.6%, 6.8% as against 4.1% for fuel and light, and 20% for house furnishings and miscellaneous commodities as against 30% in the upper income group.

Workers in cities in the North Atlantic States spent over 40% of their income for food, and only 20% or less for miscellaneous commodities. But in most of the cities of the Pacific Coast food took less than 35% and there was available not far from 30% for household furnishings and miscellaneous commodities. Furthermore, there were as many different budget percentages arrived at as there were cities studied. I suspect, indeed, that a study of the original returns would show almost as many different percentage distributions of expenditures as there were families included in the original survey.

Because they recognize that there are even greater variations in the contents of the market-baskets of widely separated income groups, the statisticians of the National Bureau of Economic Research have attempted to get a more accurate basis of measurement than any single index can afford by computing a series of five separate indices for five classes of consumers: families spending around \$25,000 a year, families spending around \$5,000 a year, urban laborers, farmers, and farm laborers. This series of indices clearly shows that the cost of living and the purchasing power of

different groups do not vary in anywhere near the same proportion, or even always in the same direction.

The compilers of these indices know only too well the limits of their meaning. The National Bureau of Economic Research states clearly that it is attempting "to find the changes occurring each half year in the value of a fixed aggregate or 'market-basketful' of commodities, this basketful being supposed to represent the typical yearly consumption of goods and services by the class in question". It adds:

Index numbers constructed in this manner do not allow for the changes in consumption which are necessarily occurring in a dynamic system. . . . Changes in the index numbers result wholly from changes in price and not from changes in the quantities of commodities for which prices are given.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics, too, has for a number of years recognized that its figures may be definitely out of date. Referring to its cost-of-living index and the survey upon which it was based, it says:

It is extremely desirable that a new survey should be made, as there probably may have been important changes in the character of family expenditures since 1918 and 1919; but the very heavy expense involved has thus far prevented the Bureau from undertaking this task.

I wonder if we realize how much and how frequently it would be necessary to adjust the contents of the market-basket if we were to make adequate allowance for the changes in consumption of commodities and services which come with the shifting standards of a dynamic society. In the decade before the war, furnace heat, inside plumbing, the telephone and even electric lights were comforts and luxuries for the upper middle class. During the war these items found their way into the worker's

market-basket. In the first decade of the Twentieth Century the automobile was a rich man's toy, in the second decade a middle class luxury, and in the third decade a poor man's necessity. In the last fifteen years, the washing machine, the vacuum cleaner, the electric toaster and curling iron, and all the rest of our household conveniences and labor saving devices have come to bid for their places in the family market-basket. The radio was all but unknown in 1900, but by the beginning of the World War it had been perfected. In the early 1920's came the development of broadcasting as we now know it, with the result that Amos and Andy have become a national institution, and the radio a household necessity.

Within this last decade cigarettes for the man, and later for his wife, have largely replaced cigars and smoking tobacco. Rayon has been generally accepted as a substitute for both silk and cotton, floor lamps have ousted the chandelier, gasoline has taken the place of hay, and fuel oil of coal. The volumes on "Recent Economic Changes in the United States" are replete with records of the changes in our living standards in the years immediately preceding 1929.

But what about the market-basket since 1929? What changes have taken place in our purchases as we have progressed from prosperity to depression? Is food taking a larger or smaller part of our market-basket? Are we spending our money today for the same miscellaneous commodities that it went for at the height of prosperity? It is a little too early to tell. We do know that pee-wee golf has come and gone. We do know that the sales of automobiles, radios and furniture have fallen to very low levels. But even so, it is as yet impossible to determine the changed contents of the market-basket with sufficient certainty

to justify rebuilding our cost-of-living index on the new basis. Apparently any such index must lag some years behind our actual consumption habits. We lead, and the index makers follow.

How far behind?

In 1930 the National Industrial Conference Board, another organization which compiles index numbers of this and that, realizing that its cost-of-living index based on a 1914 market-basket had become out of date, decided to work over its figures on the basis of a later model market-basket. But did it adopt as its new base the average worker's expenditures in 1929 or 1930? Not so. It could not be sure that either the prosperity consumption of 1929 or the depression consumption of 1930 represent accurately the current consumption trends. The best it could do was to begin publishing, in 1931, a new cost-of-living index which showed what it cost in 1931 to purchase the contents of the worker's 1923 market-basket!

But let us assume for the sake of argument that the statisticians have succeeded in the almost impossible task of working out a satisfactory method of measuring current changes in living standards. Let us assume that we have adopted the National Bureau of Economic Research series of five cost-of-living indices as a basis for wage payments and as a standard of deferred payments. Which of these indices of purchasing power should be used in determining the obligations of an individual on one economic level to an individual on another? In the case of wage payments the position of the recipient would probably determine the scale to be used, but should this principle apply to other contractual agreements as well? For example, how should the following case be handled?

In 1936 Bill Jones, an energetic and thrifty worker, buys a home for his family.

He borrows \$2500 on a five-year mortgage from Jacob Black, a retired business man with an income of \$5000 a year. By 1941, when this obligation falls due, Bill's cost of living has fallen 20%, and of course has been accompanied by an equal reduction in wages. But Jacob's cost of living has fallen only half as much. Should Bill be forced to repay \$2250, the amount due if he is to return the equivalent of his debt in terms of the lender's purchasing power, or should he be allowed to discharge the debt with a payment of \$2000, which is the equivalent in terms of his own purchasing power?

And what about the individual who shifts from one group to another during the life of a contract? Suppose John Smith, a farm laborer, borrows \$100 to buy him a team. Later he inherits a farm and in his new status as a farmer borrows \$500 more for seed and fertilizer for his first year's work. On what basis should he pay back the money he has borrowed? Should all of his obligation be computed on the basis of his purchasing power as a farmer or should it be considered that he owes \$500 as a farmer and \$100 as a farm laborer?

Furthermore, would even a series of five indices provide variations sufficient to give a reasonably accurate measurement of actual purchasing power? Does the index for the urban laborer, prepared to measure the changes in living costs for the wage-earner-renter in a large city, indicate correctly the changes in the purchasing power of the worker-home-owner in a small town? In recent months the urban renter has been credited with lower shelter costs, due to declining rents. The home-owner, on the other hand, has had little or no reduction in his current outlay for shelter, and in addition he has been forced to take a considerable paper loss in his property value.

Again, is this index for urban labor a

proper measure of the purchasing power of the minor executive or the college professor, whose income is little if any above that of the higher grades of urban labor, but whose standards must approximate closely to those of the business and professional man in the \$5000 income class? I do not have at hand any figures for the minor executive's budget. However, Miss Peixotto's study of the income and expenditures of the University of California faculty in 1922 gives us some figures for families with incomes between \$2000 and \$3000 which are comparable with the figures for the Bureau of Labor Statistics families in the \$2500 income group.

These Bureau of Labor Statistics families spent 34.9% of their income for food, 20.4% for clothing, 10.6% for shelter, and 34.1% for fuel and light, household furnishings and miscellaneous commodities and services. The University of California faculty families, on the other hand, spent only 20.9% of their income for food, and only 12.0% for clothing, but they spent 16.5% for shelter, and 50.6% for house operation and miscellaneous commodities. Clearly, these two groups, with similar incomes, have widely different standards. Clearly, in the last two or three years, they have not experienced the same decline in their costs of living. Food and clothing, which make up most of the expenditures of the urban workers' families, are the items which have declined most in recent months. But the miscellaneous commodities which account for the majority of the faculty families' expenditures are precisely the commodities whose prices have declined least.

But the proponents of the plan for stabilizing values may say: "Our idea was not to apply such an index to current payments. Our only wish was to work out a more satisfactory standard for deferred

payments, a standard which would do away with that alternating gain and loss to debtor and creditor which comes inevitably with changes in the general price level."

But is this really the only sort of loss that the advocates of stabilization of purchasing power wish to eliminate? I wonder. In fact, I am inclined to suspect from the fact that most of their pleas have been heard about the time when the lambs have been fleeced and even the bulls have been caught in the collapse of an overinflated market that something more is desired. I have a feeling that deep down under the surface there is a hope that somehow such a plan will protect its advocates from the losses which inevitably come from too much speculation.

But this is a vain hope. No amount of stabilizing of values on the basis of purchasing power will guarantee a return on poor investments, or the return of the principal of those investments at maturity. Neither stabilizing the dollar nor stabilizing purchasing power will enable an over-mortgaged apartment house or half-empty office building to pay the interest on its bonds. Neither will it prevent capital from flowing too generously into either of these fields. Neither will it prevent the over-enthusiastic speculator from paying more for securities than they are worth. There is nothing inherent in the stabilizing of the dollar which will prevent speculation on our various exchanges, for there is nothing in such a programme which will stabilize the earning power of investments in individual firms in rising or declining industries.

It is hard enough to keep track of changes in prices, it is hard enough to follow the changing values of investments, when they are measured in terms of a single commodity, gold. It is enough of a

problem to try to outguess the variations in the prices of individual commodities, and to try to keep up on the changing costs of our changing standards without the added complication of being forced to make our computations in terms of either a constantly changing or a misfit market-basket.

If we are to use as our standard of value a market-basket whose contents are fixed on the basis of some year which we agree to consider normal, why not use our present commodity, gold, in place of a bundle

of commodities? If we are to use a variable market-basket, who is to determine its variations, and in whose favor—debtor or creditor, renter or home-owner, worker, capitalist or college professor? And who is to determine the time at which the variations in the market-basket are to take place?

Our problem now is one of too many variables. All of the proposed plans, instead of simplifying the situation, will only add one more element of uncertainty, one more chance to speculate upon stability.

Language

THE SIGN LANGUAGE OF DEAF MUTES

BY O. F. PEALE

EVERYONE, at one time or another, has seen a deaf mute gesturing and gesticulating to another mute. To the uninitiated bystander, the gesturing may suggest a calisthenic exercise that has got out of control. This sign language *is* a curious method of expression, but it is, with the manual alphabet, the mute's only practicable means of conversation. Pencil and paper, which must serve him for communication with the hearing world, are much too cumbersome and time-consuming for talking with his deaf friends. Furthermore, partly because of this same sign language, and partly because of what might appear to be almost a congenital inability to master the intricacies of grammar, it frequently happens that two mutes cannot understand each other's written thoughts. The gestures of the sign language, while their meanings may be perfectly clear and logical to a mute, play the devil with the King's English.

For example, where you or I would say,

"Please pass the bread," the mute gets the attention of his neighbor at table, and proceeds to rub the palm of his hand on his chest—his own chest, of course—in a circular motion. ("Please.") Then he strums the back of one hand with the fingers of the other, as though playing a guitar. This is supposed to be imitative of one method of slicing a loaf of bread, and the two signs together mean, "Please, bread."

The whole sign language as used in conversation is a series of sadly mangled sentences like that, and a mute who learns it in childhood often falls into the habit of thinking in sign-pictures rather than in word pictures. So strong does this habit sometimes become that it is not unusual to see a mute thinking, or talking to himself, on his fingers. In the sign language the niceties of grammar do not exist, and when the mute comes to set his mental pictures into written English there usually results a jumble of elisions, clichés, transpositions, and, in short, a general grotesquerie of expression. There are exceptions to this rule, of course, but anyone who has any acquaintance with the written English of mutes can usually recognize

the tell-tale characteristics of the mute in the written products of nearly all of them.

The one-hand manual alphabet (which can be found illustrated in almost any dictionary) is used to spell out words for which there is no sign, for spelling names, and exclusively in classrooms of some schools for the deaf, where the use of the sign language is forbidden. Thus a discourse may be composed of signs interspersed with spelled words, or the whole exposition may be spelled out manually. In general, the sign language is a faster means of communication, because whole phrases can be expressed with one or two signs.

A large group of educators of the deaf are striving for the abolition of the sign language. They would substitute strict oralism and lip-reading and maintain that nearly every deaf person can be taught to talk. Perhaps, but I have had considerable contact with deaf people who have been educated in oral schools, and who have little knowledge of the sign language. They "speak", granted, but their speech is strained and unnatural as to voice, tone and pronunciation. Usually they cannot make their words understood by anyone other than their intimates. I have seen an oral mute enter a store and try to tell the clerk, with much agonizing hesitation, stammering and lip-twisting, what he wanted. No good; almost invariably the "speaker" has to resort to pad and pencil.

Advocates of retention of the sign language argue that it is a waste of time to spend hours daily in teaching articulation to children who can never hope to achieve more than a stumbling, obscure speech. The time spent in this drill, they say, might be more profitably spent in giving the child the basis of a real education. Another argument is that the deaf child, the moment he finds himself away from

his teachers, will naturally use signs in his communication with his playmates, rather than bother to try to *speak* with other equally-poor speakers and poor lip-readers. Signs grow on him, and if they do have a peculiar effect on his English, what of it?

Suppose we take a look at some of the more common signs. Both hands closed, and the heel of one rapped on the back of the other, mean *to work*. A frequent companion nowadays is this one: the thumb and fingers form a large C and this C is moved circularly and at right angles before the face: *to look for*.

The thumb edge of the hand placed against the temple, with the first two fingers wagging, means *horse*. If all the fingers wag together, it's only partly a horse—it's a mule. If the tip of the thumb be placed against the temple, and the first two fingers be crooked, it's an animal with two cloven hooves, horns, and a forked tail.

When one wants some milk, one performs the pantomime of milking a cow. Or if one wishes to be slangy, one may place the tip of one's thumb against one's temple, close all except the little finger, and wag the hand: *cow*.

The thumb and forefinger held together near the outer corner of the eye, and quickly parted, mean *surprise*.

The fingers of one hand held to the lips and quickly moved outward mean *thank you, good-bye, or good*. The same sign, except that the hand is turned palm down as it is moved away from the mouth, means *bad*.

The letter W of the alphabet, with the forefinger held against the lips, is *water*. If this sign be followed by a flowing motion of the hands, they mean together *river*.

To say *meat*, one spreads thumb and

forefinger apart, and pulls at the web between them with the thumb and forefinger of the other hand.

Girl is expressed by drawing the tip of the thumb along the cheek. This sign is derived from the strings of another day's sunbonnets. The sign for *sweetheart* differs in different localities (as, indeed, do many other signs). In one place one presses the knuckles of the folded hands together and wags the thumbs up and down toward one another; while in another one raises one's elbow slightly with the other hand.

Boy or *man* is denoted by closing the fingers to meet the thumb, in front of the forehead. This expresses, literally, *captor*, and therefore *man*.

Let's now translate a sentence into signs: "I think I will get an automobile."¹ Probably the pronoun will be ignored as superfluous, or at most, expressed by tapping the chest. *To think*, one puts one's forefinger on one's forehead, and tightens the facial muscles a bit, as in concentration. *To get*, in any tense, one grabs a non-existent duck by the neck, with both hands. One is supposed to visualize *automobile* on seeing an imaginary steering-wheel jiggled in the hands of the "speaker". The sentence is delivered and the idea expressed almost as quickly as you or I could convey it in ordinary speech.

The unprintable Anglo-Saxon monosyllables all have their equivalents in the sign language, but they're just as unprintable in signs. And one can call names in signs, too. If I point at a man, or simply look darkly at him, and push my forefinger horizontally across my chin, I'm calling him a liar.

¹The deaf as a class are good drivers, although some States and cities impose restrictions on deaf drivers, and some insurance companies refuse to give them automobile insurance. These things prove nothing about driving ability.

The other day during a friendly argument, a deaf acquaintance commented on certain remarks of mine by performing—*con spirito*, for emphasis—the following exercises: (a) He pushed his two hands vertically into the air, one on each side of his head, then horizontally, one below and one above his head. (b) He formed the letter O with each hand, and waved his hands criss-cross before his eyes. (c) He indicated with his two hands that my nose is about the diameter of a fire hose and that it curves out and down in a manner to make Jimmy Durante seem absolutely button-nosed. All of which signified that he considered me a hook-nosed, cock-eyed blockhead.

Observe that the signs as given are in reverse order. The adjective-signs frequently follow rather than precede the noun-signs. Here we have, of course, another stumbling-block for the translator of mental sign-pictures into writing.

Almost all individuals in the mute world are known to their friends and intimates by some distinguishing sign. This saves the trouble of spelling out their names when they are wanted, or when one refers to them in conversation. The sign usually becomes attached to the person in childhood, and may consist of some gesture that refers to a characteristic of the individual, or, more usually, of the first letter, in the manual alphabet, of the subject's name—either given name or last name—touched to some particular part of the anatomy. Thus, in the first case, I am acquainted with a girl who is denoted by the sign for ice-cream, because she has a complexion as smooth and soft as that commodity. In the second case, a person named Smith, for example, might be indicated by the letter S placed against the cheek, against the shoulder, against the temple, or in some similar spot.

Just as among normal individuals there are differences and idiosyncrasies in voice, in manner of speaking, and so on, so among mutes there are corresponding differences in method of expression. One person may express himself with clear, sharp, vivid signs, gracefully executed, while another may sign his thoughts with a fast, sloppy and almost undecipherable delivery. We all know individuals who, in conversation, are prone to make unexpected use of words for an effect of drollery, sarcasm, punning, or whatever. Just so there are, among the mute, individuals who break out, not with the usual sign in a given case, but with some fantastic, picturesque, imaginative gesture. It was such a mute, doubtless, who invented the use of the sign *cow* to connote *milk*.

I have often heard the opinion that the mutes' sign language originated in the old Indian sign language. This is only a myth, for there were plenty of mutes before the civilized world ever heard of Indians, and they must have had some signs. But it is true that the deaf appropriated at least some of the Indian signs. This was either because the latter happened to be more exactly expressive in a given case, or because there had previously been no sign in the deaf repertoire to denote a certain act or thing for which the Indians did have a sign.

Perhaps it will not be out of order to disillusion any internationally-minded reader who may think we have here another potential Esperanto. An occasional sign may employ the same gestures in two countries, as some words are spelled alike in English and French, but the gestures

rarely mean the same thing. Furthermore, it is no simple matter to memorize a couple of hundred signs, and be able to recognize them readily and use them fluently in conversation. There may be a slight pause between sign-sentences, but when a fast, fluent "speaker" is delivering, there is no pause between signs in any one sentence, and it requires a rather quick eye and an habituated mind to string the flashing signs into their intended sentence-frame.

For example, this sentence: "It seems to me it is almost as cold today as it was on the same day last month," would involve making from nine to twelve different signs and spelled words (depending on the exactitude of expression of the individual), and the thought could be delivered almost as swiftly as you might speak it. The signs and spelled words of a mute flow together a good deal faster than words flow together in normal speech. To get the sentence, one must recognize on the instant when one sign begins to slip into the next. In addition, the sign for *almost*, near the beginning of the sentence, might be taken by an inexpert reader for the somewhat similar sign for *easy*. Likewise, the sign for *month* is not unlike the sign for *from*.

Considering all this, it is perhaps not very surprising that some schools for the deaf have an occasional life-time employé who has not learned half a dozen signs. And there are many such employés who have not learned the manual alphabet, although the ordinary mute pupil picks it up during his first year, and acquires signs gradually until, by graduation, he is adept in the use of them.

McGRAW

BY HUGH BRADLEY

BASEBALL was a minor business in the 90's. The era had not yet dawned when more than 10,000,000 fans would visit the major league parks in the course of a season and a crowd of 75,000 would witness a single contest.

Life was simpler for the player then, too. A pair of sharpened spikes achieved about the same results as the highly intricate strategy of the present day, and a stiff punch to some tender portion of the anatomy was esteemed as good showmanship. It was a rowdy era, though retrospect has tended to mellow it, and young John J. McGraw fitted into it very neatly.

The scrappers known as the Baltimore Orioles did not regard him kindly when he joined them in Columbus on August 26, 1892. The dark, piercing eyes and jutting chin of this undersized youngster were overlooked while they regarded his slim 120 pounds.

"A fresh runt from the bushes," they decided. "He couldn't hardly be of no use to us."

A big outfielder moved ponderous hips and shoved him off the bench. A red faced, screaming wild-cat leaped back. Tearing, clawing, kicking, shouting curses, he was finally subdued by sheer force of numbers. That uprising made McGraw a member of the Orioles before they had ever seen him field a ball. It also taught him a lesson that he has not forgotten. Never again has he sat on the end of the bench: he must always be in the middle.

This, of course, is not because he is one to avoid fights. Few men, indeed, have ever issued or accepted more extempore challenges. It is simply because his florid imagination and colossal ego cannot envision him in any place save the center.

In Truxton, N. Y., where he was born on April 17, 1873, there could have been little talk of kings. Nor could he have found much time for reading up on Napoleon while selling peanuts on the railroad trains which ran near his home. Yet he has since hobnobbed with more than one king, and for years he has moved through the sports world with regal disdain. Christened the Little Napoleon by a sports writer who was only half in earnest, he has made the name a part of him. His formula for success is simple. "The only road to popularity," he says, "is to win."

When he resigned suddenly last June he had completed more than thirty years as manager of the Giants, and in that time he had led the club to ten pennants and three world championships. Only one other manager has ever had so long a career, and no other has ever equalled that record. When the season started McGraw had high hopes of another pennant to redeem the seven years that had elapsed since his last. His resignation, with the team in last place, is the most amazing contradiction in a career filled with them.

"The man who loses gracefully," he has said, "loses easily. Sportsmanship and easy-

going methods are all right, but the prospect of a good hard fight brings out the crowds. Personally, I could never see this idea of taking defeat philosophically. I hate to lose and I never feel myself beaten until the last man is out. I have tried to instil that spirit into all my teams. Namby-pamby methods don't get much in results. When a team of mine is on the diamond I want it to fight."

Once he had a team that he believed quit on him. That was in 1916. Brooklyn, managed by Wilbert Robinson, a close friend since the old Oriole days, needed only a victory or two over the Giants in the late season games to win the pennant. The Giants themselves were out of the running. In those days it was the custom for a team, thus out itself, to go easy against a team, made up of friends, which still had a chance.

It was generally believed at the time that the Giants followed this custom. At all events, they were well beaten. McGraw tried to rally them, but it was no use. Threats did not go either, for the players had received their final pay for the season.

Flushed with wrath, McGraw suddenly arose from the bench and left the park. Never again, he swore, would he have anything to do with them. They were quitters. They were deliberately throwing away a game.

It was a magnificent tirade, and the National Commission, which regulated the sport in those days, was forced to take some notice of it. The words, coming from McGraw, were enough to start a scandal, and baseball did not want a scandal then. John K. Tener, once Governor of Pennsylvania and then president of the National League, promised to take action.

There was a grand hullabaloo, pro and con, for awhile, and it was prophesied by some that the Giants' manager would be

driven from baseball. The eminent Dr. Christian F. Reisner, then of the Grace M. E. Church, preached a sermon on "Man's Greatest Temptation" in which he called upon him to retract his foul charges. One club owner tried to explain it away by saying that "Mac was only kidding." The players themselves were much upset and sought to make peace by presenting him with a bound set of Shakespeare.

So far as the records reveal, no formal notice was ever served upon McGraw by the National Commission, commanding him to substantiate his charges, but instead of going to Cuba for his usual Winter vacation he stuck around New York, where the Commission was accustomed to hold its meetings. It kept postponing those meetings, but finally it met one day, remembered uneasily that the McGraw matter was to come up, and adjourned almost immediately. The next year McGraw led almost the same team to a pennant.

II

Little Napoleon, the name that was given him half in jest, has now become all serious. When he was with the Orioles he spent several Winters at St. Bonaventure College, coaching the baseball team in return for an education. He studied grammar, philosophy, history, algebra, ethics and Christian evidences. It was at a time when college men were still almost unknown in baseball, but he has had a liking for them ever since. He remains, however, McGraw.

One day, in a crucial situation, he ordered a player to bunt. Instead the man hit a home run.

"What the hell did you do that for? I told you to bunt," roared the manager.

"Yeah, but I won the game, didn't I? I thought ——"

"That's just the trouble with this ball club," Mac snapped. "There's too much thinking going on on it. You're fined a hundred."

Such stories, true and otherwise, have given color to the legend which credits him with having directed every move of his players, on, and sometimes off, the field. There can be no doubt that he is a harsh taskmaster, even as he is liberal in his rewards, and that he esteems his own wisdom above that of others. Few men have ever heard him apologize. But even fewer have ever heard him refuse to take the blame for some move that he has ordered and which has miscarried.

When he came to the Giants he was still slim and black haired, and less than thirty years old. Andy Freedman, the owner of the club and generously credited with being eccentric, had been accustomed to hire and fire an average of two managers a year. The deposed pilots claimed that he insisted upon interfering with their work so much that no one could be a success under him.

Within a few weeks McGraw had disposed of ten players and demanded a raise for another one. Freedman protested. He ordered that the man who was to get the raise must be released, and said that he hated him.

"He stays and he gets the raise," said McGraw. And he did.

In the years that have elapsed since then the manager's face has become florid and fleshy, and his short frame carries close to a hundred extra pounds, most of it around the waist line. Until recently he was still having his own way.

It is not altogether pleasant for him, it appears, to recall some of the more stormy episodes of the past. For many years he was vice-president and part owner of the Giants as well as their manager. His hair

is gray and the lapping flesh from his thick neck has subdued that jutting chin. He is a picture of almost pontifical dignity. In speech he strives for the same level. So it irritates him to be reminded that, in his heyday with the Orioles, he was called Muggsy. It was a name bestowed out of the affection of the fans for the little fellow who would fight at the drop of a hat, and was always dropping hats, but it is the one sure means of arousing his famous anger today.

Last Spring the Giants were playing an exhibition game in Santa Cruz, Calif. The local broadcaster was introducing the big leaguers as they appeared on the field and endeavoring to show off his familiarity with them.

"And now," he bellowed through the amplifier, "comes the greatest of them all, John J. Muggsy McGraw."

Whereupon, without the use of an amplifier, McGraw let it be known what he thought of California, its climate, its crops, its resources, its citizens, its past and its future. Fortunately the broadcaster was snuggled in a retreat where he could not be reached.

In calmer moments McGraw has explained why he dislikes the name. He says that the original claimant to it was a notorious Baltimore character, a bar fly, a cop fighter and such. Because of these compromising associations it is no fit label for the manager of a great baseball club.

But he did not always have such respect for the dignity of his office. For years he had a noisy feud with Barney Dreyfuss, then owner of the Pittsburgh club. Mr. Dreyfuss was grievously offended when the youthful manager would stand on the field and yell "Hey Barney!" at him.

The benign influences of the years, in fact, cannot erase all traces of the tough little fellow who fought his way to the top

with a famous fighting team. His head is large, with the forehead fairly high and much broader than the average. It gives evidence of the considerable mental powers that he undoubtedly possesses, but it is the lower part of his face that is the more interesting.

The eyes, once large and piercing, are narrowed now by drooping lids and wrinkles. They are both direct and shifting, constantly on the alert, watching on all sides. The nose is large, almost bulbous, and from it two deep lines descend to the mouth.

It is this mouth that really shows the man. Of ordinary width and with lips no larger than the average, it droops slightly at the corners. When the lips are compressed, as they usually are, it gives the impression of pride, confidence, something of disdain and something of arrogance. It may not be Napoleonic, but it is certainly the mouth of a conqueror.

Actually, it has brought him into most of his troubles, since a vitriolic tongue goes with it. There was little change in its expression when he met the celebrated King George of England in 1914. Their conversation has been recorded for posterity. In fact, McGraw has recorded it himself in one of his extra curricular activities, a book entitled "My Thirty Years in Baseball." The quotation is more or less verbatim:

KING—I'm glad to meet you.

McGRAW—I thank you.

KING—Your game is interesting and I would like to know more about it.

McGRAW—I certainly hope that you will have a chance to see more of it.

Honors there were at least even. It was much the same when Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden visited the Polo Grounds, when McGraw chatted with Pope Pius X, and when Princess Wahletka of Oklahoma

presented him with a good luck token before the game one day.

One day last Spring one of his emissaries visited the press-box. "Mac just happened to find this laying on his desk and thought maybe you'd like to see it," he remarked to the reporters. It was a telegram from President Hoover, congratulating him officially on the start of his thirtieth season with the Giants and wishing him every success.

Once when he had a chance to be king he rejected the honor rather indignantly. It was when the go-getters of Sarasota, Fla., where the Giants were training and where McGraw himself was interested in a million-dollar real estate project, named him King of the Carnival.

III

There was little time for thinking of kings in those early days around Truxton, N. Y. Nevertheless the youngster set about early to plan a career. He wished to become a lawyer. Perhaps there was something prophetic in that desire, for his life ever since has been studded with appearances in court. He has emerged triumphantly from most of them, but it is doubtful that they have enhanced either his case or his reputation.

The most famous of these extra-mural exhibitions had its origin at the Lambs Club and took up considerable space in the papers for weeks thereafter in 1920. It was alleged that a gentleman named Boyd, with whom he had had a previous difference of opinion, was engaged one evening in an argument concerning the relative merits of English and American actors when McGraw arrived at the club. In a short time he was taking a decided part in the discussion, choosing the opposite side from Boyd.

Accounts of what happened thereafter are hazy, but it is known that the Prohibition authorities were called into the investigation, along with the police. At all events, fists, chairs and bottles seem to have been tossed about indiscriminately, and sometime later an actor named John C. Slavin appears to have fallen and fractured his skull.

In the course of time Mr. Slavin recovered and McGraw was readmitted to good standing in the club, but in the excitement of the moment two indictments had been sought against him. William Fallon, the late noted criminal lawyer, succeeded in having them both set aside on the ground that they were somehow defective. McGraw then led the Giants to championships for four straight years, being the first manager ever to accomplish the feat.

While regaling its readers with an account of this accomplishment one of the papers also carried a short summary of his more important fights. It showed that he had achieved a fifty-fifty break in his six best encounters. Such achievements are not mentioned to him now without some trepidation, yet he has often gone on record with views favoring combat.

"I guess," he says, "that I come from fighting stock. They tell that of every Irishman. Anyhow, I've been fighting for victories on the ballfield ever since I was sixteen, and I'm going to keep on fighting until I'm so old I can't fight any more. That will be when they bury me."

Once I happened to mention to him the rough and ready old days.

"Why do they talk about that?", he demanded. "Why don't they tell about how Hughie Jennings and McGraw used to stay up late at night down in Baltimore, analyzing plays, discussing things that might happen, and what to do if they did happen? Did you ever know that McGraw

and Jennings used to go out early every morning to practice, and that we used to spend an hour every morning raking the ground around our positions and picking up stones so that the balls wouldn't hit something and take a bad bounce?"

It is his customary way of speaking about himself. He seldom uses the first personal pronoun: it is usually "McGraw."

His players accepted him pretty much at his own valuation. He inspected their meal checks to see that they had not been overeating, and insisted that salads and vegetables were better for them than red meats. A player who married during the Summer was subjected to a blistering reprimand. Part of the duties of the club trainer consisted of visiting every room to see that the men were in bed at 11.30 P.M. They had to be down to breakfast before 9.30.

Naturally, there was sometimes objection to such snooping. No other manager would have dared to resort to it. I sat in a hotel lobby one day while the veteran pitcher of another team was regaling his mates with a savage account of McGraw's ancestry and habits.

"McGraw always speaks well of you, Bill," I remarked.

This was the delicate sports process known as "ribbing up" the other guy, a process at which McGraw himself is adept. A few minutes later the pitcher drew me aside.

"Say, was the Old Man really asking about me? What did he say? Can you put in a good word? Hell, I was only kidding. I'd rather play for him than anybody in baseball."

There are several reasons for this. During his long reign the Giants were among the first four clubs in the final standing in all but two years. That meant larger gate receipts and more money for the players. Again, no man in baseball has

been so good to the forgotten players of other days. Offhand I can recall at least fifty of them for whom he has found jobs as managers or coaches of other clubs. Finally, his charities must run to \$20,000 a year, and a considerable portion of the money goes to men who once played ball.

It has been claimed that his resignation was forced by a revolt of his players, that the new style athletes could not do their best when annoyed by heckling or by snooping tactics. His successor has abolished all such rules, and it is true that in recent years the club has often been most successful when McGraw was absent. But the answer is not there. To the players he continues to be McGraw. He walked out on a team once and it won the championship the next year. Some of them argue that the same strategy is being used now.

A tenacious memory has served him well. Not so long ago an elderly man approached him in a railroad station.

"I don't guess you remember me, Mr. McGraw," he said. "You saw me only once and that was only for a couple of seconds."

"Sure, I do," replied McGraw. "You're the fan who threw the blanket over my head and kept me from catching that fly ball in Pittsburgh in 1896."

He was.

One day in a small Southern town an irate woman fan chased an umpire from the field with an umbrella. Fifteen years later the umpire was appointed to the National League staff. He gave a decision against the Giants and heard his name called loudly. He looked. McGraw stood in front of the Giants' bench, derisively waving an umbrella.

No one doubts that he will return to an active part in the game. He made vehement denials when it was hinted that he suffered from high blood pressure, but it is certain that his health has been poor in

recent years. Yet that is not sufficient reason, if you know the man, for his resignation on the plea that he could not take any more road trips with the club this year. A matter of five weeks intervened between the time of his resignation and the time when the last place team would make its next long road trip. A man who has fought for everything he has ever gained and who is none too well supplied with worldly goods would not quit at such a time.

The reason probably lies deeper. Actually, it seems that it was the fans who quit instead of the players. Gate receipts at the Polo Grounds have been poor this year while Babe Ruth continues to lure great crowds to Yankee Stadium. Called a sport, baseball is entirely a business. If the name of McGraw could no longer pull them in then some other name must be tried.

As a showman he was supreme. In 1913 the club insured him for \$100,000, long before such ballyhoo had become movie property. He promoted an exhibition tour around the world and another to Europe; now he is thinking of one to South America. The European trip put the club \$20,000 in the red, but it was grand publicity.

He created a stir in England by declaring that the American soldiers were better than the British because they played baseball. No doubt the indignant British paid their way to see his ball club then so that they might express their resentment. The same motive has always helped swell the gate receipts in Chicago, St. Louis and other cities.

For years he experimented with several Jewish ball players, knowing that if he could perform the almost impossible feat of finding a great one the Giants would be \$100,000 better off at the gate on the season. In 1911 he inaugurated the Big

Business era in baseball by paying \$11,000 for a player. "You have to spend money to get it into the box-office," he said.

In 1930 the taxi drivers were on a strike when the Giants arrived in Pittsburgh. Scab drivers milled about the station, it was early in the morning, and the players were hungry. But McGraw made them wait for almost an hour until a bus, driven by a union man, could be found to transport them to the hotel. It goes without saying that the union steel workers thronged to the park while the Giants were there.

To a certain extent he can delegate authority, but once, when the Giants were training at San Antonio, he directed their work by cable from Havana. For ten years he has been urging that the teams travel from city to city by airplane.

IV

But it was not showmanship that caused him to get rid of two valuable players at a time when the club needed their services in a pennant race.

"I'd rather be in the ditch than have a man on my club who isn't playing the game honestly," he said. There is no doubt that he meant it. By the same token he meant what he said last Spring on his fifty-ninth birthday:

"Maybe I don't move around as fast as I once did, but I'm just as active mentally. I don't know whether I can think any more rapidly than I could a few years ago, but I know I don't think any more slowly."

It is probable that he would have been a success in almost any other business. He is a better newspaper man, in the matter of discovering and exploiting a story, than most of the reporters with whom he has been associated. His forensic talents, more

highly developed than those of any of his contemporaries in sport, might have won him a place in the law or on the stage. Yet it happens that he has never fared too well in his outside adventures.

Once he was disappointed in oil. A real estate project in Florida, where the streets were to be named after famous ball players, ended even more disastrously. He owned 10% of the racing concession in Cuba, but has disposed of his holding. Few people recall his movie scenario, "Play Ball." A saloon in Baltimore and a billiard hall in New York failed to bring him a fortune.

All this may be simply because his intense interest in baseball has prevented him from devoting the proper time to other things, even though he has a surprisingly good knowledge of men and current events. Certainly baseball itself has paid him well. When a salary of \$10,000 a year was considered a large one for a manager he was receiving \$30,000. That was twenty years ago. In recent years his annual earnings from the Giants have been estimated at from \$65,000 to \$100,000 a season. Only Babe Ruth and Judge Landis are rewarded on the same lavish scale.

"A man must advance himself; there is no reason for him to end his days in the same job," he told me on his fifty-eighth birthday, when some suggestion had been made about him becoming president of the club. "Who can tell? McGraw has always wanted to get ahead."

Unfortunately, his resignation does not pave the way for such a getting ahead. For years now the brawls of the three main owners of the Giants have entertained the baseball world. There is every reason to believe that they will become more bitter with McGraw in the office instead of on the field, and there is no reason to believe

that the president and chief stockholder will relinquish his position.

In the past McGraw often settled such battle royals by offering to resign. There is a belief that he made such an offer in June and that it was accepted. It is more reasonable than the theory that he was forced out by the other stockholders, but neither theory jibes with the fact that baseball clubs do not pay a man, even a McGraw, \$65,000 a year to be vice president. So he may be in a much worse position now than in the days when it was freely predicted that he must either quit the game or be kicked out.

The last of these unhappy episodes to attract wide attention occurred fifteen years ago. It started innocently enough. McGraw did not like the decisions of an umpire named Byron. Byron's nickname, of course, was Lord, and he thought so well of himself that he used to sing his decisions instead of shouting them in the customary manner. McGraw encountered him after a game. The following dialogue is reproduced from a contemporary account:

McGRAW—I hear you're saying that I was run out of Baltimore.

BYRON—I said I had been told that.

McGRAW—Why don't you say it yourself?

BYRON—All right, you were run out of Baltimore.

The fight that followed was rather general, with the admiring but somewhat prejudiced players awarding the manager the decision. It must have been irritating to McGraw to have his victory marred by the news that the league president, the Governor Tener aforesaid, had fined and suspended him for the affair. When interviewed by reporters he spoke at length.

"Tener sticks to his umpires whether right or wrong, and he don't know a good one from a bad one. I have had no serious

troubles with umpires who know their business. I have been grossly misused and misunderstood."

"What do you want me to say?" asked one of the reporters.

"I don't give a damn," it was testified that McGraw answered. "Go as far as you like. I'd give a hundred dollars if I had Tener here to tell him what I think of him."

The interview was published, so the subsequent testimony showed, after having been submitted to McGraw for approval. Immediately there was vast excitement in baseball circles. Tener was indignant, and so were certain club owners who thought that they had at last found a way of evening up old scores. In the midst of the uproar it was announced that McGraw denied having given out the interview. That left the reporters holding the bag and they refused to do it, demanding that the manager repudiate his repudiation.

Finally, with vast seriousness, the National League club owners offered to sit as a court to determine the facts in the case. Eminent counsel were employed by both sides and an opera bouffe trial dragged along for days. At last the owners announced that McGraw had been fined \$1,000 and then they disbanded hurriedly.

The question of veracity, left open then, has been decided by time, but at the moment the reporters were very much vexed. Writing in the New York *Herald* of June 25, 1917, William O. McGeehan said:

The baseball career of John J. McGraw is ended now. It's epitaph is "The Lord hates a quitter."

But that was long ago. When McGraw resigned it was front page news throughout the country. Many papers, including the New York *Times*, which gives the devitalized college baseball far more space

than the major leagues, carried tearful editorials. None of the tributes was sadder or more eloquent than the one penned by Mr. McGeehan.

V

Last Summer he was striving to arouse his team, which was playing somewhat casually, although there was a chance to win the pennant. Perhaps the umpires had grown too confident after his years of comparative silence. Anyhow, early in the season, Umpire Stark ordered him off the field when he objected to a decision too strenuously. Some time later one of his syndicated newspaper articles charged that the incompetency of Umpire Jorda had cost the Giants two games, and Jorda was released from the National League staff.

In July the team was in St. Louis when Umpire Clarke ran afoul of a blistering tirade and the manager was suspended for three days. John A. Heydler, president of the league and the man who had imposed the suspension, arrived in town a day later. I quote from New York's most competent baseball reporter:

The incident, witnessed by fans, park employes and newspaper men, was a piece out of the hectic past of the Giants' manager, long a turbulent figure and even now untouched by the calming finger of time.

Heydler ran flush against McGraw as he entered the park and McGraw blazed at him.

"That was a fine thing you did to me," he shouted. "Here I am trying to stir my ball club and make a fight out of this pennant race and I'm suspended three days for criticizing a rotten umpire! You're still backing up rotten umpires just as you backed up Klem in 1929. Clarke is a rotten umpire, and has been for two years, and you know it."

Several times Heydler sought to break in with a word or two, but McGraw quite overwhelmed him. His face flaming with anger, McGraw obviously did not care who heard him as long as Heydler did. Then, pushing his way through the group that had clustered around the pair, he made his way to the Giants' clubhouse.

Heydler was in no such belligerent mood and plainly regretted the encounter. He said, "I suspended McGraw because it was the only thing I could do under the circumstances. The report I got from Clarke was that McGraw abused him frightfully. As for this row at the gate, it was the sort of thing to be expected any time McGraw is kept off the bench for a few days. I shall not take any further action against him because of it."

Clarke is no longer listed among the National League umpires. Not so long ago McGraw addressed a gathering of fans.

"After forty years in baseball," he said, "I find that the best thing in life is friendship."

TO A REMEMBERED CITY

BY LOU WYLIE

THESE things I bear imprinted on my soul
And shut within my eyes' cupped wells:

Old arches green with moss, and mellow
With the lush decadency of fogs swept from the river.
Gray walls, and the white scent of jasmine,
And palm trees standing straight beside lagoons.
These things, and little streets that run
Like corded veins from out a tired heart,
Heavy with shadows purpling on the ground.
These things of yours I bear with me,
But I have left with you wan little woes
Plucked living from a womb that gave me
Only stillborn joys,
Pale ghosts to wander through the streets
That once my clicking footsteps knew,
Hovering on doorsills I shall never cross again,
Begging admission to a dear, remembered room,
And crying at high noon through your streets
For loves that know them not,
Knifed by the agony of unforgotten lips.

No soul but loves the brand of its atonement
And to a city I am bound by tears.

HALLELUJAH, I'M A BUM!

BY W. A. S. DOUGLAS

MR. MCJUNKIN was shaving himself in Grant Park. He had propped up a tiny piece of broken mirror in the lap of one of the naked ladies who adorn the edge of the park fountain, and had brought a fine lather to his face with the aid of brush and soap and the bubbling water. That water was there for the purpose of refreshing thirsty Chicagoans, and most certainly not for the toilet of Mr. McJunkin, but he knew that the cops were complaisant during the Depression, and he razored himself slowly and comfortably, removing a four-days' growth of grey-black whisker. The disappearing fuzz was one of his props in his business as a professional bum. Clean-shaven and fat-faced, you can't panhandle nearly as successfully as you can when you wear the unkempt beard of aging failure, but Mr. McJunkin is a shining light in his chosen calling, and so he had money in his jeans and was ready for a holiday.

Spring was here, the sun was shining, the grass was green and the tulips, like the bums, were slowly unfolding themselves in the pleasant warmth. Filthy men sprawled all over the soft sward, some dozing the morning away, some leisurely reading fourth-hand newspapers, and some engaged in political discussion.

One of these men, the Gladiator, raised himself slowly from a prostrate position, supported his head on his left hand while his elbow sank into the turf, and leered knowingly at Mr. McJunkin. The Gladia-

tor is a frowzy English ex-soldier who lost a leg at Elandslaagte during the Boer War and has believed ever since that the world owes him a living. But instead of relying on the gratitude of his native country he came to the United States in the early part of this century, and, reaching Chicago, literally sat down on the sidewalk and ever since has lived upon his lost leg.

That is, he sat on the sidewalk until the edict went out in Chicago during the early part of the Winter that beggars must not sit down to their work. The Gladiator used to lie up against the wall of the Public Library on Michigan avenue, and for a long while he did very nicely for a man whose simple tastes called only for a flop at night, three meals during the day, and anything from a pint to a quart of raw booze over the twenty-four hours. But charity got itself organized last Winter after some unhappy experiments during the previous Winter, and the Gladiator was warned that if he was hungry he would be fed, if he was homeless he would be taken in; but that he must not sit on the street any more and thereby make people who were already feeling the Depression feel it even more bitterly.

"You look like a bloody major when you're cleaned hup," observed the Gladiator, who for professional purposes wore a long beard, and, despite the showers and fumigations of the Joint Emergency Relief Committee, smelled like a pailful of old fish and sour milk.

"Taking a day or two off," replied Mr. McJunkin grandly as he washed a safety-razor blade of bristles in the drinking water of the fountain. "Feel like a jamboree and on some honest-to-God liquor. Made a little dough this Winter, Gladiator. How'd *you* come out?"

"'Ow did y'expect me to come out?" squealed the ancient. "S'help me Gawd, I thought I was back in the bleedin' Army. Rationed and bedded and washed and preached at. Not even allowed to sit down on the street, and me a blinkin' 'ero!"

"If you'd a hustled around like me instead of laying on your can you'd a got somewhere," replied Mr. McJunkin unfeelingly. "You could a hopped around on that one prong of yourn and done right well. It's the same damn thing with all you old ex-soldiers—American or English or any other kind. Corns on your bottoms from settin' down a month after you enlist, and they stay with you all your life."

Mr. McJunkin wiped his razor, squeezed the water from his somewhat mangy brush, and wrapping these, a piece of laundry soap and his baby mirror in a rag that was once a handkerchief, deposited the bundle in the hip pocket of his new overalls.

"'Ow much you save this Winter, Mac?" wheezed the Gladiator, ignoring the insults heaved at his former profession of arms. "Izzy over at the flop's sore as 'ell on you."

"What Izzy's out I'm in," replied the Beau Brummel of Grant Park. "I used a system. Every night I spent in the shelters I put away the fifteen cents I used to give Izzy for my flop. I got over thirty bucks that way and I more than doubled it eating for nothing. Altogether, I got close to a hundred bucks. Twenty-five for a party now, and seventy-five to carry me over the Summer till the free joints open up again

in a big way. And I'll pick up a little odd change, too."

"Slip us a quarter, Mac," whined the Gladiator.

From the hip pocket of a pair of old overalls, worn underneath the new blue dungarees which Mr. McJunkin had purchased for a Summer suit, he dragged out a worn clip-purse. From it he extracted twenty-five cents and tossed it carelessly to the ancient. The Gladiator caught it with ready agility. At once twenty other men, sprawled over the grass, raised their voices in chorus: "Toss us some, too, Mac!"

The plutocrat gazed at them contemptuously. He gloried in his moment.

"Hey, Rosey," he called to a withered derelict, "you come along with me, and I'll send the gang back a couple quarts of tiger's milk."

Rosey scrambled to his feet, and slinking behind McJunkin like a dog following its master, went off with him in the direction of the Madison street flops and ten-cent speakeasies. The two were followed by the benedictions of the assembled regulars of Grant Park, who would doze, drink, eat and sleep in that beautiful green spot until the chills of September sent them hurrying again to the warmth of the permanent shelters. These shelters are provided in theory for victims of the Depression but they are used freely, and perhaps to the extent of 90%, by the never-working and never-intending-to-work scum of America and Europe.

II

I first met Mr. McJunkin in a West Madison street speakeasy—about the worst spot of this kind that I have ever been in. A visit had been suggested by Orville Dwyer, who, since the violent death of Jake Lingle, is generally conceded to be Chicago's most

knowing crime reporter. Mr. Dwyer had been in the place, liked it and thought that I would like it too. At his suggestion, however, we brought our own liquor.

We arrived in the place by passing through the length of a flophouse. The proprietor of the latter opened the door for us and led us through his sleeping quarters—a long low room with two tiers of wooden bunks. Upstairs, he told us, was a resting place of higher degree. For the wooden bunks you paid ten cents a night, receiving in addition a blanket and a so-called pillow. Upstairs for fifteen cents you got a bed with a mattress of sorts. For twenty cents you were privileged to occupy a spring bed in a cubicle.

It was a cold Winter night in the second year of the Depression. But the wooden bunks in the flophouse were practically empty.

"Where," asked Mr. Dwyer of the proprietor, "are all your bums?"

"Over in the free shelters," he replied. "Where the hell did you expect them to be? Think those rats are going to pay out good dough to me for a coffin-flop (*i.e.*, a wooden bunk) when they can sleep on springs over in the shelters, and on top of that get a bellyful of good chow in the morning? I'm thinking seriously of closing the joint and moving over there myself. If they made me receiving clerk I'd give most of those bums the air when they come in trying to put it over on me."

"But these shelters are handled by the Emergency Relief Committee," I observed. "The money it raises is for the benefit of the genuine unemployed. How do your bums manage to horn in?"

"By slipping it over on those birds," replied the flophouse owner bitterly. "I'll lay you that the most of the guys living off the city and the rich folks and the charities have never done a lick of honest work in

their lives and never intend to. Oh, I know we're in tough times. Nobody knows it better. Now, you're going in the joint, ain't you?"

"Yes," signified Mr. Dwyer.

"All right. Walk around and find out, if you can, how many of those bums are living in the shelters—and intend to live there while the Depression is on. You'll find they all do—for none of them live here. This mess-up is great for them, but it's hell for me."

We negotiated the signals at the door and were ushered into a scene worthy of Hogarth. The place stank of disinfectants and it stank too of the filth of human beings. The combination, we were to learn later, arose from the fact that the majority of the men were indeed, as the flophouse proprietor had told us, from the emergency relief shelters strung around Chicago. These men, in order to qualify for free beds and free food, had to take baths. The baths they skimped as much as possible, but they couldn't prevent the fumigation of their clothes. Hence the combination stink, which was as no other stink—not even the stink of a battlefield.

The room was long and low and was in fact a continuation of the bunkroom behind us. We found out that it was a concession granted to the operator of the speak-easy by the flophouse proprietor in order that he might catch up with the profits which were being shorn away from him by charity. A score of bums were sitting around and more were clustered at the bar, some drinking and some living in hopes.

The Gladiator was there refighting the battle of Elandslaagte with an Irishman who, judging from his conversation, had also worn the uniform of the Sassenach Queen. Young men, old men, middle-aged men—all dirty, all useless, all parasites.

But money was being spent. Ten cents for a drink of alcohol and water. You could even get a tiny nip for five cents, and if it came to that the proprietor never turned down three cents. But below three cents he wouldn't go.

A derelict was singing "The Holy City" in a surprisingly good though somewhat whiskey-soaked voice as we came in. Later he obliged with "Love Nests in France," and it was only then that I recognized in him a former performer on the New Amsterdam Theatre roof—the old Ziegfeld Midnight Frolics. But I didn't mention that. When he had finished, a big stout man in overalls, who looked different from the rest of them, ordered a drink all round. He included us with a smile and a flourish, and we called for ginger-ale as a chaser for the whiskey we had brought along. The barman had to send one of the customers out to get it, but he was back in jig-time. Trust him to make haste while free drinks were going around.

Mr. McJunkin—for he was the over-alled man—apparently sensed us as fellows of his own sort—men of the world. For with little ceremony, and after Mr. Dwyer had risen to his opportunities and bought a round of drinks—in which ceremony he and I alternated from then on—he seated himself at a table with us, and shared our two pints of drugstore whiskey.

III

Sipping the good liquor Mr. McJunkin became oratorical, boastful and confidential. He spoke of and to the bums around the room who were staring at us plutocrats with the eyes of collie dogs, pleading for further and yet further supplies of tiger's milk, in the fashion the old-time Kings of France must have used to the common people.

"Not a brain in the lot", observed Mr. McJunkin. "But at that they're getting by nicely, better than they ever did in the days when times were good. This Depression's a Godsend to the bastards."

"And how about yourself?" asked Mr. Dwyer. "You seem to be the only guy in here with money."

For Mr. McJunkin had just ordered another round—twenty drinks of alky for a dollar seventy-five; being two dollars, less twenty-five cents discount on a wholesale order. The boys were getting warmed. One had the nerve to come up and attempt to panhandle us. McJunkin kicked him clean across the room.

"I got money," he proceeded, "because I got sense. I ain't worked in twenty years, fellas, and I ain't ever going to work. Fifteen more years and I'll qualify for a pension and a spot in an Old Soldiers' Home. Yeah, I done ninety days in the Spruce Division up in Oregon and I guess that qualifies me."

Judicially and with well-timed snorts from our bottles of Bourbon, we led Mr. McJunkin on to talk of how bums, amateur and professional, fared in a time when everybody was feeling the pinch.

"It's paradise, just paradise," he declared. "You'd think panhandling would slip. The hell it does! Fact is, guys who have had a bit of misfortune themselves are so much easier to touch up with a good come-on like mine."

"And what is that?" I asked.

"Job-in-Hammond," replied Mr. McJunkin. "Hammond's just a ways out here, in case you don't know. You look at me, fellas, and you'd set me down for a decent laboring man. I'm decent, but I'm no laboring man. I'm a specialist. I walk up to a guy and I say: 'Pardon me, mister, but could you tell me how I can get to Hammond, Indiana?' No begging, pan-

ning or stemming about that, is there? Now, if I'd started to hoist the price of a cup of coffee or a gag like that the sucker would probably hurry on. But here's a decent guy in overalls wanting to know the way to Hammond. So he starts to tell me—trains, busses, street car and such. And I'll cut in: "That's fine, mister. I got a good job coming to me at a brick factory there. But I got to walk, mister. Tell me the road to walk."

"Well, sure as hell the bird will say: 'Why, that's twenty-five miles, buddy.' And I'll say: 'I can't help that, mister, I got a job when I get there but until I do I'm flat. So it's the old tramp, tramp, tramp for me. Thanks a lot, mister, and I'll be on my way.' I'll start to drag off tired like, and then he falls. Never less than a quarter and many a time it's paper money. Come on, boys, the drinks are on me."

There was a canary in a cage at the end of the bar and Mr. McJunkin halted his reminiscences while he ordered the bartender to cover it up and let it get a night's rest.

"Poor little tramp!" he said. "It's been singing away there for the last twenty-four hours to my knowledge. Just like these girl hostesses at the nightclubs that have to work and work and work entertaining folks and end up with nothing. Why, it's got bags under its eyes."

This charge was denied by the barman, but a committee of customers made an examination and reported that Mr. McJunkin was correct—the bags were there, all right. But it was only after threats of either physical violence or a departure in force to some other joint that the barman covered up the canary and permitted it to go to sleep.

"Take Capone," continued Mr. McJunkin after the bird had been tucked away. "There's a guy that's had it tough

and could feel for us guys. He opened a free eating-place on South State street and served food which would cost you as much as half a dollar anywhere. Beef, pork, soup, bread, coffee, even chicken. All you could eat anytime you wanted to drop in. No questions as to where you come from. No baths and no fumigations."

"That food was all from the grocers and butchers, and they had to come across," I observed.

"Who cares where it was from?" said Mr. McJunkin.

"And there's Wrigley, the chewing gum king," he went on. "His eating house was the next best thing to Capone's and I would go to one from the other just for variety. I've seen myself eat three times a day in each one of them. Wrigley would never turn a guy down. The Salvation Army's a little tougher for a guy like me that looks sort of well fed, but they'll give you something sooner than have it on their conscience that they might have been wrong. Good people and they don't force religion on you. You can eat well with Rockefeller's Baptists too, but there's too much Bible-thumping there for me."

"In other words, a man does not have to go hungry in Chicago, even in these times?"

"Not unless he's nuts," replied Mr. McJunkin. "I've been in Chicago since this Depression started in the Winter of 1929, and here I'll stay till good times come back and I have to start hustling again. I eat when I want to eat and I've half a dozen places to choose from. A smart guy don't have to go hungry in this man's town."

Mr. McJunkin told us that he was living for the present in one of the permanent shelters of the Emergency Relief Committee, of which there are half a dozen scattered through the town. The food was

good, he said, but sort of samey—beans and chopped meat and coffee and bread. No variety, as at the Capone and Wrigley places. But there was plenty of amusement at all the shelters. Radios in the common rooms, and the unemployed with “talent” had been marshalled into entertainment units which toured the shelters nightly. Only a few weeks ago Chicago society put on a show called “The Breadline Follies,” made up of such units. Everybody that was anybody turned out to see the performance, and it was reported that \$4000 was taken in. Before the show the entertainers were given a banquet at a Loop hotel.

During the Winter hundreds of unemployed men were checked nightly into the temporary shelter of the Relief Committee. Of these Mr. McJunkin gave the opinion that two-thirds were professional bums, either made so by the Depression or of long years’ standing. From the temporary shelter they are examined and passed into the permanent shelters, where they have hibernated for the past two winters. No

doubt there are many real victims of misfortune in these groups, but the majority are parasites.

I was in a Loop restaurant the other night, and noticed a man in blackface wearing the accoutrements of a minstrel and gorging a huge meal. When he had finished he rose without paying and said to the proprietor as he left: “Thanks for taking the tickets, Joe. Now be sure and show up.”

I asked Joe, the proprietor, what he was referring to.

“Oh,” said Joe, “I just bought some tickets for those Breadline Follies. That bird used to be one of my waiters.”

“Can’t you find him a job?” I asked.

“He don’t want a job,” laughed Joe. “He’s too damn lazy. He’s been laying around those shelters for God knows how long. Sings a bit, so he’s got a soft snap of it. That guy won’t go to work as long as he figures the Depression owes him a living—and not then, unless they close every shelter in town.”

THE ESCAPE FROM BABYLON

BY LOUISE OWEN

WHEN I was a child I had a two-fold ambition: first, to be an author, a desire that possessed me from the time I was eight or nine years old; and second, to have six children of my own. The first was probably inspired by the fact that I liked so well to read, and had, myself, a facility for spelling and handling words. The second doubtless arose because I was one of a family that was large in comparison with the families of most of my mother's friends: there were four of us, a close-knit and devoted group that seemed to enjoy life much more intensely than the families of one, two, or even three children with whom we used to play.

As I grew older the first ambition grew stronger, encouraged by a waxing degree of success. For a writer, everything that is published adds fuel to the flame, at least for the first few years. From poems printed in the local newspapers I progressed to poems in the school magazine, then in the college monthly, and finally—the acme!—to things that were paid for and appeared in real periodicals. The second ambition, on the other hand, became subservient and uncertain. A large family was out of date, and was moreover incompatible with a career. When I was married, at twenty-two, it was not in my scheme of life. I thought vaguely that I would like to have children, perhaps two or three; though actually I knew little about babies, except that they did not grow on rose-bushes or cabbage-plants.

It is interesting to remember the comments that people made when I was married. The usual remark was: "Don't let marriage interfere with your career!" The copy-book phrase was, I suppose, an indication of the fact that no matter how many men and women in the country at large want to be writers, there is a certain glamor about each of them, at least among the group comprising his own friends or his own community. Whether an author is looked up to or down upon, whether his fellow-citizens praise or decry him, they derive an enjoyable thrill from seeing his name on a printed page, from feeling that he is someone they know in the flesh. It may be because almost everyone would like to write. At any rate, people said to me: "Don't give up your writing!"

But it seems impossible to be creative in two ways at once. Pregnancy is, for me at all events, incompatible with literary productiveness. When I am having a baby my mind becomes more and more subordinate to my body, a fact that is doubtless a wise provision on the part of nature. Intellectual keenness steps out of the way to make room for physical effort; for if pregnancy is not altogether unbeautiful, it is at least often uncomfortable and unbecoming, and a fuzzy state of mind is the best thing in the world to take the edge off it. It is a good time to do a great deal of reading, to store up ideas.

As a matter of fact, the excessive suffering of childbirth is something of a fable so

far as I am concerned—not that I particularly enjoyed bearing my first child, though even that was not the agony usually associated with the event. Literature, and mothers, are prone to glory in the idea that all motherhood involves a descent into the so-called Valley of the Shadow; but there are certainly plenty of other women like me who have found it a brief, safe, and normal experience, not much worse than a bad morning after. Objectively, obstetrics is a universally fascinating matter; subjectively, it is more than likely to assume the proportion of a minor martyrdom. It sustains the last and greatest illusion about the nobility of the female human, the last leg of her toppling pedestal.

Among my own friends are women who when their children were born knew nothing about the process from the time of the first labor pain until the somewhat astonished awakening with the whole business over; and they talk about it with a trace of deprecation, an implication that they have been cheated out of something they would rather not have missed. I myself all but watched the birth of my last four babies, and found it an extremely exciting process. It is still, to me, the most extraordinary and marvellous thing imaginable, not only the actual moment of birth, but the months of pregnancy, the realization that I can carry inside myself another person, living and moving, who at exactly the proper moment will pop out into the world and begin to breathe. The period of incubation is exciting, not from the old-fashioned and sentimental standpoint of “carrying a child under one’s heart” (it is, in reality, much nearer the kidneys), but because one’s intellectual interest in the process of growth is tremendous.

Children, I think, are fun in themselves. There is nothing in the world more fascinating than observing the varying results

of commingling chromosomes. It is fascinating to watch the changes in them as they progress from infancy to childhood, to see how individuals with the same heredity, the same environment, and the same training develop their own tastes, sprout their own talents, and become personalities in their own right. There are even temperamental differences between my twin babies a few months old that are as obvious as the difference between the shape of their heads and the length of their fingers. The more children there are in a family, the more interesting it is to watch the growth of this individuality, to trace likenesses and dissimilarities between them, and to note the influence of each one on the others. Not only do they teach one another to read, to sing, to play games; they also realize through their contacts with one another that they are members of a community *in parvo* in which each one must observe certain amenities—courtesy, thoughtfulness, coöperation—if he expects to receive the same consideration.

Indeed, it seems that since every child, no matter what form of society he grows up into, will sooner or later be obliged to comply with rules of some sort, adjustments will be easier to make if he has lived his early years as a member of a group, and is accustomed to the give and take of life in a large family. One advantage of living in comparatively primitive surroundings, as we do, is that there are definite and useful tasks for every child which tend to make him aware of his place, his importance, in the social scheme: filling wood-boxes, “picking” eggs, putting away dishes. And even better than the children’s reasonably willing performance of their particular jobs is the pleasure they take in volunteering their aid; they like to wash baby-clothes, to empty ash-trays, to help make beds.

II

Although this return to an awareness of the realities of life had not entered much into our calculations when we decided to move into the country, it seems now to be one of its most important aspects. As life withdraws farther and farther from the soil, it leaves the mechanics of existence more and more in the background; in a city house with one or two servants it is disassociated from kitchen and laundry; in a city apartment it is carried on almost entirely in the living-room, and cooking, heating, washing and ironing go on automatically, with as little evidence as possible of the necessary machinery. There is not room nor time for it. The average woman, whether by necessity or preference, has as little as possible to do with running a house, certainly with doing the actual housework.

A popular argument against housework is its monotony, the repetition of the same tasks day after day, the using of dishes only to wash them, the cooking of food only to consume it and prepare more. But it seems to me that these things are not more tiresome or more endless than filing cards, or teaching from the same textbooks year after year to children who probably do not hear and will not remember the texts, or indexing books and pictures in a library, which I did before I was married, or even sitting at a typewriter and pounding out hundreds upon hundreds of words. They are perhaps more tiring, since they involve a great deal of physical effort, but they are on that very account more wholesome. For, after all, they are the very stuff of daily living, the fundamentals upon which existence itself depends.

Another argument against housekeeping as a profession is that it is a waste of time for women with brains. But anyone who has tried to do it will deny that. The plan-

ning, the carrying out of the daily mechanics of any house is a complicated and detailed business, changing from day to day. The preparing of balanced, appetizing, varied meals, the serving of them with every dish just ready at the same time, is a job in itself. The establishment that runs most smoothly, most pleasantly, is run by the woman of intelligence and industry, who feels the dignity and importance of her profession, and enjoys the freedom and leisure it allows. There are few, if any, other professions that allow so much latitude in the performance of the daily routine of work, so many hours of freedom in the course of the day; few that permit their employes to lie down, or go for a walk, or stop to read a magazine, at almost any moment when the spirit moves. There are few that enable a woman to feel so strongly that she is paying her way in the world, that she is not only self-respecting but self-supporting. Finally, housework is probably the only job in which the woman—employé or partner—enjoys the privilege of being in love with the boss, with no fear of another woman's having a greater right to her lover.

This matter of freedom and leisure makes matrimony one of the best occupations possible for a woman who wants to carry on a career begun before marriage. Physical work, and writing, especially, are complementary. It is harder to write after a day in an office, or a day of actual reading or writing, in a publishing-house or in editorial work, than it is after a morning, however strenuous, spent in putting a house to rights. There is a nice balance of mental and physical effort, an alternate subordination one to the other. Far from being irreconcilable, housework and writing have proved, so far as I am concerned, a happy combination; I can think about my stories while I am washing dishes, and

write about my house when I sit down to my typewriter.

The adjustment is not, of course, an easy one to make, or an immediate one. It has been in my own case the product of experience, time, and trial and error, with a certain amount of heartbreak along the way. It is in part that my sense of values has changed, that my capacity and appetite for work have grown proportionately as I have become more mature. I know that it is easier now for me to take care of five children than it used to be to take care of one, and that I take greater pleasure in my last two babies than I did in any of the others, though my household help is almost as sporadic and variable now as it was then. I write more now than I used to, and I believe that what I write is better.

I am convinced that our present mode of life in the country—my husband's and mine—which began as a more or less doubtful experiment, is for us, at least, as near an approximation of the Good Life, of the self-sufficiency of our ancestors adjusted to our own needs and desires and modified by Twentieth Century superinductions, as we are likely ever to be able to achieve. We have room, privacy, and freedom; there is space and safety for the children; we pay less in dollars for all the essentials of life, and we have more of them, than we ever did in the city with a larger income in actual money. Nor is that on account of the present greater purchasing power of the dollar, but rather because we pay by work and effort for many of the things which in the city take an overwhelming proportion of a family budget.

Best of all, it is fun, pure unadulterated fun. We find it a far happier way to live than in the city apartment where we spent the first few months of our married life, and which would be all but impossible with any children; it is happier than our life

was in the suburb to which we moved from the city; it even seems happier than what we have observed of the lives of our friends who live in those attractive towns outside New York and Boston whose occupants refuse to call them suburbs.

The cumulative result of such factors as these decided us to exchange life in or near a city for life on a farm in New Hampshire: these and the fact that my husband, as an architect, not only could find work to do in New Hampshire as well as in New York but preferred to practice his profession where he would be able as an individual to make actual changes and improvements (*sic!*) in the face of the landscape. It seemed to him more interesting to do buildings in a region where he himself could administer a whole project from conception to completion than to have a place on the assembly line that is the average large city architectural organization.

III

So we came back to New Hampshire, which was native soil for us both. Since the economics of the matter were our first concern, we scoured the country to find a place that would be cheap as well as accessible and ample; and were fortunate enough to find what we wanted for about \$3000. New Hampshire and Vermont are both land-poor; therefore our purchase price got us almost a hundred acres of land—field, pasture, and wood—as well as a seven-room house a hundred and twenty-five years old.

It stood on a hilltop, with a view of distant mountains to the west, and woods and rolling fields on the other three sides; there were pear, plum, peach and apricot trees, and an orchard of forty apple trees. There were two hen-houses, a small stable, and a large barn. The house itself was solid, tight,

and clean, with a new roof, and screens and double windows for every window. It was well-proportioned, with many characteristics common to Colonial houses of its period—a central chimney with three fireplaces, one of them with a five-foot opening and a Dutch oven; another in the kitchen, also with a Dutch oven; good woodwork—mantels, dadoes, paneling, and wide board floors.

Of course it had a few drawbacks. The road was impassable for several weeks in the Spring—but some neighbor was always willing to bring up his pair of horses and pull cars out of the mud, and there was practically no traffic: a serious matter where small children are concerned. There was no electricity in the house, but the last street-light on the road was practically on our front lawn, so the wiring was inexpensive. The telephone poles stopped in front of our house, too, so a telephone was a quicker and easier acquisition than it usually is. To be sure, we were put on a fifteen or twenty party line, but that may be a major amusement on long Winter evenings.

Having purchased the place, it was necessary to get along for a time with the old-fashioned inconveniences: an iron hand-pump piped into the wall under the kitchen sink, a neat little yellow-painted backhouse built into one of the sheds, and a galvanized iron washtub set in the middle of the kitchen floor whenever baths were needed. Until we could buy a kitchen range, we did some of the cooking over one of the fireplaces, and I baked in the Dutch oven. We heated the whole house with stoves and fireplaces, burning wood that we bought from the neighbors, or that they cut for us from our own woodlot. The surprising thing about our life was a realization of how many of the accessories of civilization are luxuries and not neces-

sities. The most luxurious thing imaginable was the change from hand-pump to hot and cold water faucets, and from the three-holer and the wash-tub to a real bathroom, which was not so much an acquisition as a breath-taking adventure.

But that first year was not only incredibly inexpensive, but an incredible amount of fun. We bought a few hens and raised our own eggs—and oh, the taste of fresh eggs just out of the nest! We had a piece of land plowed and planted a small garden, spending hours in the early morning, when mist lay like lakes in the folds of the hills, and late afternoon, when the west was dissolved in violet, pulling out the sod of five years' growth, shaking it, and throwing it out of the garden. We grew peas and beans, lettuce, radishes, cucumbers—the ordinary staples of a small truck garden; enough for us to eat all Summer and a little to can for Winter.

The next year we experimented; we had four times as much garden, and successfully raised not only the green stuff of the year before, but corn and scallions, potatoes, sweet peppers, kale, salsify, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, and okra. We surprised our farmer neighbors, who had told us there was no market for local produce, by selling string beans, scallions, peppers, cucumbers by the bushel, kale and broccoli to the local markets: enough to pay the costs of our whole garden. We canned between two and three hundred jars of fruit and vegetables, most of them our own products, a few—strawberries, raspberries, blueberries—purchased from neighbors or picked nearby. And next year we hope to put in an asparagus bed and—God willing!—raise French artichokes. The only things we shall probably never try to grow are coffee and tobacco.

In short, we have started to solve our own economic problem to a great extent

by becoming "self-conscious producers"; and our solution may well be that of many of the vanishing Middle Class. Here land is cheap and plentiful, and advice is sound, though free; here the outlook is on fields, trees, hills and sky, instead of adjacent back yards and side windows; here the rent item, including taxes, interest and amortization on a first mortgage, is only 10% of our monthly income, and for some of our neighbors is as low as 5%. Here the children can wander outdoors from breakfast-time till dinner-time with no danger from traffic or kidnappers. The cost of wood averages \$6 a cord, which can be reduced to \$1 a cord for hauling if we cut it on our own woodlot and saw it ourselves. The problem of clothes is settled by overalls, riding-breeches, shorts, bathing-suits, or nothing at all. The liquor problem is taken care of by home-made beer of malt syrup, molasses, or pea-pods, and wines made of every kind of flower, leaf, root, vegetable, or fruit.

Of course, in this as in other respects, it may be that our standard of living is low, in the conventional sense of the word. Home-made beverages instead of commercial hard liquor, at least as a steady diet; three children in one room and two in another, instead of one child in one room; a country road, bumpy, rutted, or impassable much of the time, rutted, or macadam or concrete; woods, fields, and mountains instead of neighbors; one bathroom, and no central heating plant; evenings spent in coasting or tobogganing in our backyard, or sitting by a tremendous fire reading, drinking beer, or even popping corn, instead of playing bridge or going calling.

But all in all such a mode of life has made us more, rather than less, interesting, if only as objects of curiosity. We have, partly by accident of circumstance and

partly by choice, become living exponents of the Back-to-the Soil movement, and find it not only practicable but enjoyable. And it is surprising, particularly since the depression, to realize the change of attitude among our acquaintances, whose silent or spoken implications that we were slightly crazy have turned to interest that is almost envy.

IV

We have not, and have never had, any delusions as to our ability to make the farm our mainstay, our entire means of support. We are not proficient enough as farmers for that, and we realize that the small farm in New England is on its way to economic extinction; New England is not, and can never again be considered, a farming country. We shall be more than satisfied if it merely pays for itself with the help of a large vegetable garden, a well-cared-for orchard, a small flock of poultry, and one or two cows and pigs.

That will mean that we will be supplied with all our vegetables, Winter and Summer; with eggs and poultry; with milk, cream, some butter, some cheese; with veal; with hams and shoulders, bacon, salt pork, lard, and sausage, and such porcine sidelines as hogshead cheese, scrapple, and pigs' feet. By "pay for itself" I mean not only that many of our culinary needs will be taken care of, but that by the sale or exchange of surplus vegetables, meat, eggs, and fruit the actual carrying charges of the house and land will be entirely, or almost entirely, paid: taxes, cutting of wood, hauling of ice from the pond nearby, plowing, pruning, cutting hay. Only such essential extras as tobacco, gasoline, books, clothes and binges will have to be provided by architecture and literature.

It is not an easy life in the familiar sense

of the word; but if it is satisfying, and happy, such terms as "easy" and "hard" lose their theoretical value, and cease to matter. Our great-grandmothers, even our grandmothers, knew its joy, were surrounded by tangible evidences of it: clothes they wore, rugs they wove, food on the table prepared by their own hands from the produce of their own gardens and barns. In the making of these things was as much satisfaction, as much inspiration (taking the word at its doubtful but accepted best) as ever went into the painting of a picture, the inscribing of a poem; and the joy in those arts is, after all, denied to most persons. What our generation of women is likely to forget is the close relation between all forms of creativeness; that skill, an eye for color and line, and the touch of the creator's personality, are common to clothing, to pastry, to poetry.

There is, indeed, an essential sameness about the clipping and fashioning of phrases, and the cutting and stitching of fabric; the putting together of ideas and words, the neat tying of loose ends of thread. It is entirely, as far more reputable persons than I have suggested, in the point of view. Women who dislike to sew, who find cooking dull, are as likely as not dull women. There is an actual domestic approximation of story-book magic in the process whereby a number of ingredients mixed in a bowl and set in an oven become something entirely different from any of the ingredients. If this seems absurd, observe the face of a child who watches for the first time the making of a johnny-cake or a soufflé.

Certainly none of this generation of parents longs for the return of the days when women's functions were only domestic, and her place was at the kitchen sink. In that pre-machine era the wife herself was the machine. Yet this same wife is now the

victim of the machinery that has released her. And the men of this generation and the last, who built the mechanical devices that freed their women, are victims too. All of them who have smelt the incomparable odor of bread just out of the oven, who have seen cream skimmed thick and wrinkled and yellow from shining milk-pans, butter patted with wooden paddles into charming little balls, who have tasted fresh-cut asparagus and home-preserved fruit—all make unwitting comparison between their memories and the uniformly baked loaves they eat every day, the cans of fruit that all taste alike, the vegetables picked in Florida the week before.

This is not a panegyric of the past, nor an elegy; nor is it a condemnation of the present, nor even a lament. I know as well as anyone the advantages, the beauty, the kindness of machinery, and I know that domesticity, though on the wane, is not entirely perished. But there is an aspect of physical effort that I do not think is understood: there is release, there is opportunity for enjoying the fine art of personal creation in those homely and overshadowed vehicles of the creative instinct, the kitchen range and the sewing machine. Everyone has a dash of this instinct to create, this desire to make, to build, to shape. Nearly everyone forgets, and is forgetting more and more, that it is an instinct fulfilled as completely in cookery as in poetics, as beautifully in gardening as in sculpture, with as much dignity in sewing as in drawing. There is, in fact, quite as much satisfaction in making a good Hollandaise sauce or onion soup as in writing a sonnet.

It is this feeling that gives not only satisfaction, but piquancy, to an alternation between typewriter and sauce-pan; this feeling that has put my own writing in its place in the order of things as they are, where it is no longer spelled with a capi-

tal. And in a life based on such fundamentals as eating and drinking, children and their formal and theoretical education, enough recreation, and plenty of hard work, my writing is worth more because my time is more precious and so I work more carefully in my free hours; and because I have so much more to write about, more material to draw on: ideas and experience, work and theory.

It is also true that in a neighborhood like this of ours the neighbors, although few, are very real people, far more highly individualized than neighbors are likely to be in a thickly settled community. Almost every one of them is a character interesting in himself, from the two aged men who live next door to us, keeping house for themselves, and subsisting almost entirely on eggs and bread, to the farmer who settled here after years of work as a ship-builder on the West coast and a mechanic in New York, or the woman who after having nine children in ten years went out working as a midwife.

And as interesting as the neighbors we have acquired are the contacts we have made since we have been living on the outskirts of civilization. Our friendships are more valuable, our friends more congenial; and strangely enough, we see them oftener. Perhaps that is because, being farther away from them, they and we make more effort to see each other; which partially obviates the surface danger of getting into a mental rut. It seems that, rather than losing touch with the world and what is going on in it, we keep up with the stream of events better here than we ever did before. For just as it is easier to gain a proper perspective of things when they are past, so it is easier to estimate values when things are at a distance. The farm is a vantage-point, an ivory tower from which we get a bird's-eye view of life. By means of a New

York paper (a day late), by reading the *Atlantic Monthly*, the *New Masses*, and the *New Republic*, Willa Cather and John Dos Passos, and bulletins from the Department of Agriculture, we keep a balance, obtain a telescopic view of the extraordinary drama that is American life.

To complete the picture it is necessary to get away from the farm occasionally, and since New York was our old playground, we go there oftener than anywhere else. Twice, three times, perhaps four times a year we renew our affection for Bagdad-on-the-Subway, sometimes only my husband and I, sometimes with one, two or even three of the children. They go with us to the Aquarium, the Bronx Zoo, and the Museum of Natural History; they ride on the el and the subway and the tops of buses. We go—without them—to Julius's, Tony's, Whozis's, to hear Cab Calloway and to see Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne. We are living examples of the country cousins who know more about where to go and what to do in the city than the metropolitane. And the very fact that our rent, food, and living in general are so low enables us to finance our binges, to pay for escargots, old-fashioned, and theatre tickets.

These expeditions are as important as olives between glasses of wine, pleasant in themselves and essential for clearing the palate. Maintaining a critical standard involves seeing architecture, pictures, plays, shops, people. A change of scene makes the colors of the accustomed landscape more pleasing, just as being away from the children makes them seem all the nicer when we return. But for the most part we are happy enough—almost too happy—merely carrying on the ordinary routine of our lives: my husband with his profession, I with my writing, both of us with bringing up the children and running the farm;

and living in comparative isolation makes us closer as a family, makes us appreciate and understand one another better, since we are together more than the members of most families.

V

What may happen as the children grow older it is of course impossible to know. Now each of the three older ones feels that he or she is an important part of a hard-working, self-respecting organization, each with a definite place, a definite share, and definite tasks. For them, as well as for us, a large family is not only desirable but necessary, for mutual help and as companions to one another. They like it, and they like us; we have better times together as a family than we do with most other people, for we have congeniality—and there are a good many of us.

The children have a great deal of intellectual curiosity, and they share, as much as youngsters can, the critical attitude toward life that comes from living on intimate terms with reality: food and fuel at their living sources, art and science adapted to the usages of domesticity. Whether as they become conscious that their background is comparatively unconventional they will tend to become conservative, as the children of radicals are popularly supposed to do, it is hard to foresee. I would like to wager, rather, that they will go many steps beyond us, though the increasing impact of conservatism that they will meet as they progress from school to school and year to year will be greater in volume than the funny ideas they will live with at home.

Of course, my husband and I, as the children of conservative parents who believed in the first chapter of Genesis, the Republican party, the sanctity of the pre-

vailing economic system, and the glory of battle, have departed far from the traditions of our ancestors. But as far as our own children are concerned, we have a tremendous advantage over our parents in that we have—we think—clear and logical reasons for our beliefs and opinions; whereas our fathers and mothers could not, or would not, explain their faith in the Virgin Birth, their hatred of Roosevelt and Wilson, and their profound conviction that it was beautiful to lay down one's life or sacrifice one's face or limb for a moot cause.

It is not that we wish to impose our particular set of beliefs on our children; if they do no more than acquire through living with us a thorough-going skepticism and its concomitant openmindedness, they will have an intellectual handicap of years over us and all our generation. If they must recite pieces on Memorial Day, and go to church with their grandparents, so much the better; they will not have to combat the fallacy of the negative instance later on. We shall not even do what one of our New Hampshire friends did when his small daughter decided to go to Sunday-school because her friends all were going; he took her aside every Sunday when she came home, and after asking what the lesson for the day had been, painstakingly pointed out to her the absurdity of believing that the whale swallowed Jonah and spat him out still alive, or that it was possible by a wave of the hand and an abracadabra to turn water into wine . . . Rather we feel with another friend that it does no harm to have one's children familiar with the prevalent superstitions; they are more likely to feel that they, like us, are from Missouri.

Meanwhile, they feel with us that it is fun to live, fun to be part of a large family, fun to work, play, and read together. They take pride in being able to help: our seven-

year-old son delights not only in filling the woodboxes, but in heaping up the wood to his own height; our six-year-old daughter even likes to wash diapers, and the four-year-old to hang them up. They learn in the most practical ways how to coördinate; how to take care of babies and how to drive nails: the sort of things that children who live in cities must be sent to school to acquire.

They even share to a certain extent our sense of ability to cope with the economic system, the realization that although gold may vanish and there may be no cash in the house, we will still have the ultimate necessities of life: food, warmth, shelter—potatoes if not bread, eggs if not roast beef, wood if not coal and kerosene.

What they cannot, of course, share as yet is our sense of change and inevitability, the knowledge that this house which we are still building as a home for ourselves is at the same time only a background for their future. Whatever memories we may have of this house and these surroundings are also the memories of our children, mutual and yet unutterably different. As I sit at my typewriter, I am at this moment the future image of my children's mother as they will remember her, sitting before a typewriter. I am my own ghost.

And as surely as our children will grow up, they will leave us—we not only expect it; we may even be glad of it when the time comes. Because I remember how strangely and vividly I was aware of the absolute break in my life when I first left home to go to college, I think I am adjusted to the inevitable break between my own children and me; and because my husband and I have our professional interests, as well as a constantly increasing respect, admiration, and affection for each other, I think the break will be easier for all of us. Our children and our awareness

of their future heightens our value to each other even more than the consciousness of our past and present together.

Above all, living close to the soil, watching seasons vanish and reappear with hardly a perceptible interim, seeing one generation of crops planted, ripening, harvested, and the ground plowed under ready for the next planting—raising one brood of chicks, eating their eggs for a year and them the next year—seeing flight after flight of birds returning when, only yesterday, they left for the South—brings home an overwhelming sense of the shortness of life. It is necessary to wring much from it to compensate for its brevity—and, as we feel, its finity for us as individuals.

These very qualities make it valuable in proportion to the amount of fun it makes possible, whether it be the pleasure of accomplishment, the joy of happy companionship, or the stimulus of creation. It is fun to achieve any sincere desire; to have a poem or a book published, and to have children. Modification of an ambition in no way lessens the satisfaction of maintaining it: but whereas I used to say, when Shakespeare and Dickens were the greatest names I could think of, that I wanted to be more famous than either, now I am perfectly contented to be only as famous as Louise Owen; and whereas six children used to represent for me the ultimate in family life, now I think—if there is time after our immediate progeny is ready to launch on life—that I should like to have six more.

Many of my ideas will (I trust) change as radically in the years from thirty to forty as they did from twenty to thirty; but I believe that the philosophy which is the result of my life up to now will remain essentially the same, and that life is good, but a little better here than we are likely to find it elsewhere.

THE LIFE OF ART

BY HOLGER CAHILL

ELLEN sat up in bed. She looked down at Rudy. He was lying on his side, breathing quietly. Ellen got out of bed without making any noise, took her clothes, and went downstairs. She dressed and went to the door and looked out. The air was cool. Things stood out in it clear and sharp—the sands, the rocks, the blue plain of the sea, and far out near the place of the horizon, the warning finger of Nubble Lighthouse. Ellen looked at the clock. Six. Rudy would not be up for two hours. She put on her big straw hat and walked down to the cove.

The sun was just beginning to warm the air. Ellen walked down the footpath to the cove and sat down far out, where the water splashed her feet as the waves ran up to the rocks and leaped back. She stretched out on the flat rocks. She could hardly believe that she was here after the months in the city, when she had to pack herself into the subway twice a day, go to the office, come home at night to cook supper for Rudy, wash the dishes, sit around their one-room apartment, and then go to bed.

In the Winter it wasn't so bad in the city. Then Rudy's painter friends would come in once in a while. It made work for her to do, but she liked it standing in her kitchen alcove fixing sandwiches and drinks and hearing the voices in the big room. Rudy's friends talked art or told stories of the days in Paris when they were younger and the then young Picasso and Braque and Matisse were just beginning

to shake the world of the academies. She always liked to hear them talk, though she felt a little out of it, for she had never been in Paris and the places they named were unknown to her. Some of the art talk was Greek to her too, but it was a Greek she loved to hear.

It was pleasant to Ellen in the Winter, though it was tiring, but in the Summer she hated the city. Most of Rudy's artist friends were somehow able to leave town and go to the country. She and Rudy had never been able to go to the country together for more than a week or two because she could not leave her job. Sometimes Rudy would be able to go and stay a few weeks with friends, and she always liked for him to do that. He could paint when he was out in the country, and that was the most important thing in the world to him. She knew that it was so, and it was best so, that for a painter the most important thing in the world is painting. Every Summer that she could remember she had stayed in the city, alone or with Rudy, up in their room on the hot nights. All that she and Rudy could say to each other was, How hot it is! I hope it will be cooler tomorrow. What does the paper say? Hottest July in ten years and no relief of wind or rain. Then they'd go to bed and try to sleep.

Ellen wanted to forget about all that. Now she was going to have a whole Summer of it here in Maine. It made everything different and good again. She and Rudy

had a house all to themselves for the first time since they had been married. The work at the house was part of this happy time for her. Rudy was working and he was happy over his work. She knew that he was, though he never said a word about it. She felt that he liked it here. They both liked it. They had been in Maine just a week.

Ellen got up from the rocks and walked back along the path. She crossed the little bridge over the creek that cut between the rocks and came to the house again. Someone was sitting on the doorstep. At first she thought it was Rudy, but she was sure it couldn't be, for he never got up until she began making breakfast. When she came closer she saw that it was Lewis Brett, a painter whom she and Rudy had known for many years. He did not look up at her, even when she came close. Not until she spoke to him did he look up.

"Hullo, Ellen," he said. He looked unhappy.

"I thought you were staying up beyond the cove," Ellen said.

"I am, but I can't stand it up there. I can't work."

"Have you had breakfast?"

"No."

"Come in and sit down," Ellen said. "I'll have breakfast going in a minute."

He came in. Ellen went into the kitchen and lit the oil stove and put water in the percolator for coffee. Then she polished up the pan to make bacon and eggs, and put the bread for toast in the small oven over one burner of the stove. Rudy would be up in a minute. She could hear his feet moving over the board floor above. The noise of making food in the morning always waked him. He would be down as soon as he had his trousers on.

The coffee was going good in the percolator when Rudy came down the stairs. He

stopped on the first landing. That was where he stopped every morning. "The coffee smells good," was what he always said when he came to the first stair landing. The smell of coffee in the morning was a battle-cry to him. It stirred him above everything, and he would stop on the first stair landing and say, "The coffee smells good." This morning he saw Lewis before he could say it and he stopped. He looked down at Lewis. Lewis looked up at him.

"Hullo, Lewis," Rudy said.

"Hullo, Rudy," said Lewis.

Rudy didn't say anything about the coffee. He had his shirt on his arm and he put it on quickly. As soon as his shirt was all fixed Ellen brought the steaming percolator and set it on a plate on the table. They all sat down. Only Ellen spoke.

"How lovely it is this morning," she said.

Rudy nodded. Lewis said nothing. Ellen didn't say anything more. The only sounds in the room were the sounds of eating. When they were through Ellen got up and cleared the table. Rudy and Lewis sat at the table and smoked. Ellen came in and sat down with them as soon as she had put the dishes away.

"You look sad, Lewis," Ellen said.

"Yes," he said.

II

She did not ask him why he was sad because she knew what was the matter with him. He had just broken with the girl who had been his sweetheart for many years. The girl had lived in this town, and every Summer Lewis had come and stayed at the home of her parents. He had a big room in their house that he could use as a studio. In the Winter he would come out to visit the girl or she would go into the city to

see him. Once or twice he had gone abroad. Then he had not seen the girl for a whole year, but mostly he had come in the Summer to her parents' place and there he had been like one of the family. Everything was made easy for him.

The girl liked it. Anyway she never said she didn't. Her parents didn't say anything to her about Lewis, but her brothers got kind of restless after a few years and found a good many things to say. They said it looked funny, and all the neighbors were talking about it, that a girl went with a fellow for years, and he lived at her home every Summer, and nothing happened in the way of a marriage. It was not right. It gave the family a bad name.

She told them they didn't understand because Lewis was an artist and he was different. But after her brothers had been working on her a few months it began to get her. She tried to talk to Lewis about it. He always seemed to think of something else to talk about when she brought it up. At last she came right out and told him. She said all the neighbors were talking and her brothers were making her life miserable. He would have to do something about it, she said. Lewis couldn't seem to think of anything to do.

Finally, she got mad and said they'd better break up right away if that was the way he felt. Lewis said he didn't see why they had to rush to do anything one way or another. He supposed what her brothers and the neighbors wanted was for them to get married, but an artist had to paint first of all, and they didn't have enough money to get married on now. You had to think of painting before you began to think of getting married. Well, she said, he'd had a good while to think about it. She said no more and neither did he.

The next day he acted as if they had never had any talk about it. He went on

doing the things he had always done, and asked her if she wouldn't come down to the rocks and pose for him in her red dress. She said she couldn't do it that day, but she might be able to do it the next. Well, he said, come tomorrow if you can, and if you can't come I'll make a landscape of the rocks and leave a part of the canvas where I want to put in a figure. She said all right and they left it at that.

Well, it seems there was a fellow in the Summer colony at the Seahawk Hotel who had been sweet on her for a long time. She had never given him much encouragement. He used to come to the house once in a while and talk to her and the folks, but nothing had come of it. He was a good-looking fellow, younger than Lewis, and he had money. Lewis never paid any attention to him, but the family had their eyes on him all right.

The brothers thought he was a swell guy and they said so to the girl. That turned her against him in the beginning, but after he had been coming around a while and had done a lot of nice little things for her and her mother she got to thinking he wasn't so bad, though she never would admit it to anybody. Her family knew it. Everybody knew it except Lewis. The day when Lewis asked her to come and pose down by the rocks this other chap had taken her on a drive to Middleford. It was the first time she had gone out with him. Lewis saw her at supper that night. He didn't say a word to her about the trip, but asked her again about posing on the rocks. She said she'd see. They left it like that.

She didn't pose the next day or the next, and after that she went for the week-end to the home of a friend in Bar Harbor. Lewis said he wished she'd hurry back and pose for that picture. She stayed the week-end and then she stayed another week. Then Lewis got a letter from her that told

him he'd better forget about everything. Her father and mother had become very cold to Lewis. The brothers let him know pretty straight that he'd better clear out. The short and the long of it was that she married this other chap within a month and Lewis was out in the cold. All that he had left of her was that canvas of the rocks with a blank space in it where her figure in the red dress should have been.

Ellen knew Lewis' story, though she had not heard it from Lewis. He never spoke about it. It would have surprised him if he had known how much other people knew. He didn't seem embarrassed the way people are embarrassed when they know others are talking about them and they can't do anything about it. He only seemed sad and put out because he had lost his girl and had to live alone in a shack where there was no one to cook for him. He couldn't work that way.

Ellen knew that was why he had come to their place. She knew that he wanted to stay. At first it made her angry, the way he came and threw himself on their doorstep. She wanted to tell him to get out but he looked so miserable she didn't have the heart to do it. Poor fellow, it was too bad. It was all because he was so poor he couldn't afford to get married. She felt sorry for him.

Rudy finished his cigarette and got up. "Guess I'll start working," he said.

"I can't work," Lewis said.

"What's the matter?" asked Rudy.

"It's lonesome where I am. There's no one to look after the shack. I can't work there."

"That's too bad," Rudy said.

"Look here," Lewis said, "you've got an extra room. I like it here. Why don't you let me stay? I could pay for my board and help you pay the rent too."

Rudy looked kind of uneasy. He didn't

say anything. Ellen knew he didn't like to have anyone else around when he was working.

"I won't bother you," Lewis said. "I'll work up at my shack all day. I won't bother you at all, only in the evening."

That cheered Rudy up a little. "Well, I don't know," he said. "We could stand company in the evening, I guess. It's kind of dull here now."

"Yes," Ellen said, "we could get along with a little more company in the evening."

Ellen didn't really feel the need of company. She didn't mind sitting alone in the house in the half-darkness of the oil-lamps listening for the night sounds. Still, it wouldn't be a bad idea to have someone around to make talk in the evening. She and Rudy didn't have much to say to each other. Lewis would open up and talk as soon as he felt at home there. He would tell them all about that business of the girl. Ellen knew he would want someone to carry his sorrow with him. He would tell her all about his troubles.

"Yes," Ellen said, "it would be nice to have someone to make talk in the evening."

"Well, I'll come, then," Lewis said.

"All right," Rudy said.

"Thanks," Lewis said, and went out of the house without another word.

III

After Lewis came Ellen and Rudy always stayed at home in the evening. Once or twice they were invited to go out but they couldn't go because they couldn't ask people to invite Lewis and it would be a shame to leave him alone in the house. Lewis never wanted to go out, anyway. Rudy didn't care about it either. Now that there were three people in the house he felt there wasn't any need to go out. Ellen

liked to go to friends' houses when she was invited, but now she and Rudy always stayed at home.

Ellen sat at the table and sewed. Rudy and Lewis read the papers. Sometimes they made sketches of Ellen as she sat at her sewing-basket. When she moved they'd say to her, Hold that a minute or two longer, Ellen. That's a fine pose. I just want to put down the idea of it. That was all the talk there was in the evening. There were some French art books in the house and once in a great while Rudy and Lewis looked into them. Neither of them cared much for books.

When they looked at a book Ellen would want to ask them about it, but all she could get out of them was, Yes, that's a book on Picasso. Did you meet him when you were in Paris? Yes, I met him a few times. What's he like? Oh, he's a good painter. I mean what kind of a man is he. He comes from Spain, a Spanish fellow.

Sometimes she asked Rudy and Lewis about their own paintings. That never got anywhere because they made it plain that she did not understand. Rudy knew that she had studied at the Art Students' League before he married her, but he didn't believe women had any right to be fooling around with painting. Ellen never got very far with that subject.

Ellen began to dread the evenings. It was the hardest work to her, sitting in a room with two men who never said a word, but only sat there and looked at the papers, or pushed themselves back and forth in rocking chairs. Lewis sat in the big rocking chair. He was almost lost in it. The chair was boxed in like an old church seat, narrow and deep. Only the top of Lewis' head came up out of it. He sighed heavily as he turned the pages of the evening paper.

Sometimes he would pull himself up and look around the room. He's getting ready to say something, Ellen would think to herself whenever he did that. He's going to talk. But he never did. He just settled back in the rocking chair and set it creaking again. Rudy would balance his chair far back on the rockers, put his hands together and crack his knuckles. These little personal tricks, which had never annoyed Ellen before, now began to irritate her so that she could not stand it. She would get up from her chair a dozen times during the evening and go to the kitchen pretending she had work to do. She would stand at the back door looking out to sea, listening to the slow beat of the waves as they leaped back from the rocks.

When she had stood there a long time she would go back to the front room again. Rudy would look at her when she came back as if he were going to speak, but all he did was to look annoyed. Ellen would look at him with a defiance in her, as if she wanted him to say something and then she would answer him back. He never gave her the chance. He said nothing. Nobody said anything.

Night after night it was the same. Rudy and Lewis didn't find anything wrong with it. It was part of life as it should be to them, but for Ellen it became more than she could bear. She began to understand what that girl had gone through with Lewis. She noticed the way he did things, the way he sighed as he turned the pages of the paper, the way he sat hunched up in the rocking chair, pushing himself back and forth, the way he lifted himself from the chair as if he were going to say something. She felt sure he was going to talk about his troubles with that girl every time he lifted himself from the chair like that.

He needed sympathy and how could he get it if he didn't tell anybody about the

way he felt? She was ready to feel sorry for him, but when he slipped down into the chair again and said nothing and just rocked himself back and forth the sympathy she was ready to give him turned into a feeling that was almost a kind of hatred. She felt there was nothing more disgusting than a little man pushing himself back and forth in a rocking chair. She felt like telling him for God's sake to stop that ridiculous rocking, but she couldn't say it, though the words ran in her head like the last line of a phonograph record playing over and over again.

In the daytime Ellen didn't mind it so much, for then there was plenty of work to do, looking after the house. She could stand it during the day, but the evenings were hard for her to bear. It was just like the hot weather nights in the city again, but it was more lonesome. There were none of the city sounds to make you know that people were alive and moving about. Outside everything was still. The seabirds were quiet. Sitting in the front room, it was hard to hear the sound of the waves. Whatever of life there was seemed to have narrowed itself down to the front room.

Night after night Ellen would get up from her chair and walk about restlessly. She would stand by the back door and say to herself that even the hot city would be better than this. It would be better for her to go back and take her old job again. She would make up her mind to tell Rudy and Lewis when she went in again that she was going back to the city. Tonight I'll tell them I'm going back. But when she looked at their faces she couldn't do it. She couldn't get herself to say it, and she'd put it off for another day. Tomorrow I'll do it. I'll tell them tomorrow night. Later when she had calmed down she would feel that she had been too sorry for herself and that she ought to think more about doing

things for Rudy and Lewis and less about her own troubles. Then she would think up ways of making the house more pleasant and comfortable for them, and she would stand over the oil-stove for hours to cook the things they liked.

Rudy and Lewis never seemed to notice the things Ellen did for them. They just accepted them and said nothing. One day Ellen spent the better part of the morning over the oil-stove making a fish stew for lunch. It was Rudy's favorite dish. She knew how to make it the way he liked it, and she went to a lot of trouble to make it right. That day Rudy and Lewis were painting down by the rocks, and they were in a hurry to get back after lunch. Rudy ate a little of the fish stew and then pushed his plate aside. Lewis barely touched his.

"What's the matter with the stew?" Ellen asked.

"Nothing," Rudy said.

"You don't seem to like it."

"I just don't care for it today," Rudy said.

"I never cared much for any kind of stew," Lewis said.

Ellen started to pick up the plates from the table. She was trying hard to look calm. It wasn't any use. She couldn't do it. Her hands trembled so that she had to set the plates down again.

"What's the matter?" Rudy said.

"You don't care for it," Ellen said.

She said the words with such intensity that both Rudy and Lewis looked at her kind of scared.

"What's the matter?" Rudy said again.

"Matter? You're asking? You and Lewis. You sit here day and night and you never say a word. All you can say is I don't care for it, and then you yawn and crack your knuckles and fall asleep in a rocking chair. I can't stand it any longer. I'd rather be alone in the city working at

my old job. I'm going back to the city, I tell you."

Ellen rushed into the kitchen and shut the door. After she had been there awhile she began to feel kind of foolish, and she remembered how ridiculous the two men had looked sitting there and looking up at her with their scared faces. I must have looked ridiculous too, she said to herself. Then she remembered that she had made dessert for lunch. She dished it up and took it in to Rudy and Lewis. Rudy looked down and studied a piece of bread when she came in. Lewis got up and tried awkwardly to help her with the table.

"I'm sorry, Ellen," Lewis said. "I'm sorry. What you said is right. I guess we're pretty terrible around the house. I know we are. We never stop to think about how you feel. Give us a chance, Ellen. We can be different. You'll see."

Rudy looked up from his piece of bread. He seemed surprised as if he had never thought of a thing like that before. "Why sure," he said, agreeing with Lewis. "Why sure."

"We ought to be more sociable," Lewis said. "We certainly ought to. We'll begin tonight. Tonight we'll have a real conversation."

Lewis was trying hard to make things right with Ellen. He knew what it would mean if she went back to the city. Rudy looked awkward and didn't have anything to say. He just nodded and agreed with Lewis. Ellen couldn't find much to say either.

"I didn't mean all that," she said. "I guess I lost my temper."

IV

Rudy and Lewis went back to their work after lunch. Ellen felt that she had been a little foolish, but mostly she felt excited.

She began to think that she should have spoken to them before. After all, Rudy and Lewis were grown men and they could snap out of it. There would be a change in them. Things would be different from now on. The thought made her excited all afternoon. She did a lot of shopping for supper, got ice-cream and cake for dessert and a bottle of wine from the bootlegger down at the cove. They would have a little party that night. They would be gay together and laugh about the way she had lost her temper. She went to the cleaner's and got her chiffon dress. That night she would not wear one of her gingham dresses. She would put on her good dress under her apron. Then she set the table with a lot of extra plates and put on linen napkins instead of the paper napkins they had been using. All afternoon she was excited and working to get the house dolled up for the evening.

Rudy and Lewis were tired when they came in for supper. They had been painting out on the rocks all afternoon and the sun had been pretty hot. They weren't in the mood for talk. Ellen didn't pay much attention to that. They're tired and hungry, she thought. Wait till they've had time to rest up a bit and drink a glass or two of wine. When they had eaten Ellen cleared off the dishes and brought in the coffee and the bottle of wine. Rudy had eaten so much that he didn't get much of a kick out of the wine. He drank one glass of it. It made him sleepy. He covered up a yawn with his hand. He's tired, Ellen thought, but he'll be all right after he's rested a little.

"You don't have to help me with the dishes," Ellen said. "I know you're tired."

Neither of them had offered to help. Ellen put on her apron and went into the kitchen. She had the hot water ready for the dishes and she washed them as fast as

she could. There were a lot of dishes because of the way she had dolled up the table. She washed them and dried them and stacked them on the kitchen shelf. Then she washed her hands, took off her apron and looked at herself in the kitchen mirror. She felt tired. She looked at her face in the mirror, turning it to get a side view. Her face looked worn. She ran a cold washcloth over it and patted some powder on her nose. Then she went into the front room and sat down in the straight-backed chair by the table. Her excitement was gone and she was tired. Lewis was sitting hunched up in the big rocking chair. All she could see was the top of his head as he pushed the chair slowly back and forth. Rudy was sitting at the table holding an empty wine glass. He was sleepy. He set the glass down and yawned two or three times.

"It's warm tonight," Ellen said.

"Yes," Rudy said.

Lewis didn't say anything. The steady creak of his rocking chair made it hard

for him to hear what was said. Suddenly he stopped rocking as if he had just thought of something. He pushed his head above the side of the chair in the way he had of doing and looked at Ellen as if he were remembering something he wanted to say to her. She waited for him to speak. He looked at her for a minute and then let himself sink back into the chair. He threw his shoulders back against the chair and started it rocking again.

"So," he said, "that's that."

That was all Lewis said. Ellen looked at Rudy. His head had sunk down on the table. He was asleep. Ellen went into the kitchen and looked at the rows of newly polished dishes on the shelves. She began to laugh. She went to the back door and sat down on the steps and laughed until the tears ran down her cheeks. She couldn't stop. Ellen sat on the back steps sobbing with laughter. Through her laughter she could hear the steady creakurreek of the rocking chair as Lewis pushed himself back and forth.

JUST LIKE US

BY JOHN VAN ZANT

THE old girls hesitated before crossing Michigan avenue.

"What's the sense in it? *They* won't buy nothing," said Mrs. Ames, sniffing.

"They got money, ain't they?" asked Mrs. Biddle, nudging her companion with a jovial elbow. "Come on," and she picked up her skirts and rolled across the street, her broad fanny swaying like a farm wagon going over a plowed field. Mrs. Ames followed, hippety-hop. On the opposite corner they stopped for breath.

Mrs. Biddle looked scornfully at her skinny friend. "The trouble with you is, you get wore down too easy, Mrs. Ames. Just because we had a bad morning don't prove anything."

"It proves we ain't made no money."

"Then we're bound to get something this afternoon. That's the law of average."

People looked curiously at the pair of them; Mrs. Ames, scrawny, white faced, with a long red nose, dressed in a wrapper under a dirty yellow coat, and a flat hat on top of her head; the chunky Mrs. Biddle in a sleazy black that flapped around her legs. Two old girls, plodding through the sunshine of a fresh Spring day, leaning against the breeze from the lake.

They went into an apartment entrance and pushed one of the bells. Silence. It was cool and dark. Mrs. Biddle blinked and rang again, holding the bell. The buzzer buzzed and Mrs. Ames jerked open the door.

"Who is it?" faintly from above.

"How do, ma'am? Do you want—?" began Mrs. Biddle, scampering up the stairs.

"Nothing today, thank you."

"This is a new kind of dustless polishing rag, ma'am. Once tried, you'll never be without it," volleyed Mrs. Biddle, as she wheeled around the first landing. "Fits the hand, saves time and work —"

Slam!

Mrs. Biddle came down again, discouraged. "I guess this ain't the right kind of place."

"I told you *they* won't buy nothing, Mrs. Biddle."

"Why won't they? They're folks, ain't they, just like us? If they like a thing, they'll buy it. Let's try somewheres else." She held the door open for Mrs. Ames, who was scratching herself thoughtfully on the arm.

"Are we going on?"

"Sure," answered Mrs. Biddle, pulling her blue beret to a jauntier angle.

"All right. Wait a minute." With five quick jabs, she rang all the other bells, then scuttled to the street, hip, hip, hippety-hop.

"What'd you want to do that for?" demanded Mrs. Biddle.

But the skinny one only mumbled something about "they think they're so smart," and relapsed into contented silence. The innocence of her expression was something to see.

They tried again at the next building. They tackled apartments, houses, shops, restaurants, whatever they came to. They went up one street and down the other all afternoon, Mrs. Biddle steaming along more, and ever more stubbornly, Mrs. Ames hopping after. But something seemed to have gone wrong with the law of averages. They didn't sell any Little Dandy polishing rags.

Finally, along toward evening, they sat down side by side on a handy curb to talk things over.

"I can't make it out," said Mrs. Biddle.

"What the hell are you doing?" asked Mrs. Ames.

"My foot hurts," said Mrs. Biddle. With one shoe off, she was feeling of her in-step, wiggling her toes with a sort of joyful caution.

"Well, I'll be damned!" said Mrs. Ames.

II

The sun was going down. The street was full of cars. People were coming home, people who lived in these tall, hostile buildings. A sedan pulled up close by and a young woman got out; it seemed to puzzle her that Mrs. Biddle and Mrs. Ames should be sitting there on the curb.

"Pretty, ain't she?" commented Mrs. Biddle, staring.

"Yes."

Another silent interval.

"You know what I think, Mrs. Biddle?"

"What do you think, Mrs. Ames?"

"I think we ain't ever going to make any money this way."

"Is that so? Well, what do you want to do? Starve?"

"*They* won't buy it, that's all," and Mrs. Ames pulled in a worried way at the end of her sharp red nose. "I'm two weeks behind with my room now."

"You're no worse off than me, with Mr. Biddle a year out of work," brooded her friend. "I don't know what things are coming to."

"Sure. But what do *they* care?" with a sweeping, final gesture.

"Well, I can't make it out, Mrs. Ames. I worked hard all my life and now I guess we'll have to go to the charity pretty soon. It don't seem right somehow. Seems like *they'd* help a person out a little, that's trying to get along. They're folks, just like us."

"They won't buy it."

"Well, I don't ask much. I'd just like to git ahead a little —"

"Come on. Let's get going!" whispered Mrs. Ames fiercely.

"Huh?"

"There's a officer."

The policeman looked suspiciously at them as they walked past him, but could find no reason to stop them; two self-respecting old ladies out for a stroll.

"The son of a bitch!" whispered Mrs. Ames out of the corner of her mouth to Mrs. Biddle.

Mrs. Biddle jumped, just enough to notice, and looked behind to make sure that he had not heard. "You'll get into trouble some day," she warned.

Out of range they fell into their usual gait, the one rolling, lumbering, the other hopping like a jerky doll that winds up with a key. They were going home, with nothing to show for their day. The breeze began to feel cold.

But the day was not quite over. The spirit of enterprise was strong in Mrs. Biddle; she was sure that a person who watched his chance could get ahead. All it took was work and a little push in your make-up. Thinking so, she saw and seized her big chance.

"Look, Mrs. Ames!"

"Huh?"

"People. Lots of 'em. Got money. Can't stay in a hotel like this without money." She pitched her voice low, because the doorman was eyeing them.

"They won't buy it."

"If I can talk to them, I can sell them."

"How you going to talk —?"

"Look! He's going out to that car. Now!" and she scuttled through the revolving door, Mrs. Ames trailing after.

Up the broad marble steps they went, Mrs. Biddle with her skirts lifted high, Mrs. Ames hopping two steps at a time; a moment's pause in the glare of the lobby; then straight for the nearest woman, a resplendent creature in evening dress.

"Lady, would you help an honest woman with a family to support—" began Mrs. Biddle at a distance of ten feet.

"Once tried, you'll never be without it," chimed in Mrs. Ames. "Cleans, dusts, polishes, fits the hand perfectly."

"But, really, I don't understand."

"Buy a Little Dandy polishing rag, lady. I got a family to support."

"Please buy one, lady."

But by that time the house detective, the doorman and two bellhops had come on the scene.

Across the lobby, down the stairs and out again, the old girls were hustled.

"We want to talk to some ladies," sputtered Mrs. Biddle, losing her judgment for the moment.

"No ladies here," answered the house

detective. "Now beat it before I call the wagon. And don't try that again, understand?"

They understood.

III

When they got to State street, they were still rubbing their sore places. Not a word had they said to each other.

All at once Mrs. Ames stopped to watch something. Mrs. Biddle slowed up too. On the other side of the street an old bum was making a touch.

They could see him shamble along beside a prosperous looking man for twenty or thirty paces; they could see his lips moving rapidly and on the well dressed man's face a look of annoyance. Giving it up, the bum dropped back. But he continued to walk, planting one foot flatly in front of the other, in a slow hopeless way, until he brushed past, almost touching the two women. His eyes looked as if he didn't see anything much out of them.

"What's the matter, dad?" asked Mrs. Biddle.

He stopped, but it took him a full minute to get his eyes focused. Then he answered in a puzzled tone, "Nothing."

"Here," and she put a dime into his hand. "Don't you know it's no use stopping people like that? *They* won't give you anything." Then, sharply, "Mrs. Ames, will you tell me what the hell you're laughing at?"

THE COXCOMBRY OF ART

BY JOHN McCLURE

SCAMANDER—I met a poet today so taken with himself that he had to walk sideways to keep from ascending into Elysium.

POLYCRATES—You may be sure he will arrive there eventually, where he will be able to converse without vulgar distraction with the other glorious gods and heroes.

SCAMANDER—It seems anyone clever enough to rhyme *hump* with *rump* has the privilege of lifting his eyebrows at soldiers and metaphysicians. If he can match the colors on his palette with the blue and red of an ape's posterior, or harmonize them among themselves, he can whistle at the philosophers. Such men base their pretensions on the majesty of art.

POLYCRATES—Not even an idiot would challenge art's majesty when it is great. Yet it requires crust on the part of an individual who poetizes or paints to assume the purple himself. Caesar was a soldier, and so is Centurion Simplex. But can Simplex claim Caesar's glory because they both soldiered? Can any jackanapes with a brush in his hand and a pot of paint at his elbow demand the reverence we pay to Apelles?

SCAMANDER—That is what I object to.

POLYCRATES—The affectation of artists is more madness than effrontery. It springs from conceit or self-pity. With a few glorious exceptions, artists never have the self-sufficiency of good cobblers and soldiers, which is highly impersonal. A childish egoism leads the poet to say nobody ever lived or loved like me, and the painter to say nobody ever before perceived the beauty of the world so clear. If they were men of reason, they would recognize that millions have experienced the same emotions, perceived the same beauty, thought the same thoughts, but that by a peculiar technical skill they are able to render and interpret what others merely perceive and feel. Skill may be a great virtue, but I have never seen it so rated. It does not justify the selfrighteousness of æsthetes. Can these fellows pretend, in reason, that a man who turns sonnets and ballads on erotic themes has lived more deeply than the poor devils who cut their throats for love? Or that the marine painter, however excellent, admires beauty more deeply than the fisherman who cannot give up his hard calling because he so loves the sea?

THE MUSIC ROOM

BOY SOPRANO

BY GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS STEWARD

MY FATHER was a Methodist preacher. The family included my mother and eight sons. One child had died in infancy. I am the seventh-born son. As all the churches my father pastored, owned or rented parsonages, we were always assured of shelter, but we were never so certain of food and clothing. But whenever the food supply threatened to vanish, a pound party would spring right out of the air; we children believed that it came in answer to humble prayer. These parties always took place at night after bed time. Unusual laughter and chatter accompanied by an incessant banging of doors would awaken us. We younger ones would scurry to the balustrade in the upper hallway over the stairs, and through sleep-laden eyes catch hazy glimpses of paper bags and parcels being brought in through the constantly opening and closing front door by cheery women and joking men.

Fascinating visions of good things to eat floated before us as we looked, but woe betide us if our laboriously suppressed enthusiasm, bursting out willy nilly, betrayed by utterance our presence on the darkened stairway. The correcting parental hand of a Methodist parson is particularly heavy. A membership which constantly watches for, and perhaps secretly longs for, filial lapses over which it may slyly gloat, forces him into a harsh tyranny over his children, which demands conduct at all times second only to that of angels. At our surreptitious nightgown parties giggles

sometimes were our undoing. The result was the rod and a tearful return to bed. But next morning we were allowed to inspect the contents of sacks and parcels, our eyes glistening and mouths watering, as we noted beans and bacon, sugar and syrup, flour and meal, butter and lard, and other such homely foods.

The matter of clothing the family was less easy of accomplishment. The congregation gave my father black suits of regulation frock coat and pants, but they were hardly suitable for us boys, even if painstakingly altered and marvelously fitted by my clever mother. The problem seems to have been solved by buying new suits and overcoats for the older boys and allowing these to descend step by step, as they were outgrown, to the youngest, passing through my mother's deft fingers for mending, recutting and refitting. I distinctly recall wearing a pair of pants—trousers was an unknown name then—that had come down from one of my older brothers. Originally long, they had been cut to knee length.

My spindly legs emerged pathetically from their wide openings, which ventilated my trunk deliciously in Summer, but sent whipping drafts freezing around my shivering thighs in Winter. But it was the best that could be done evidently, for most of the family was clothed in these home-made hand-me-downs, and we must have made a wonderful sight when we filed into church on Sundays. There was justification in this economy, for preachers have never been well paid, and my father's salary, frequently in arrears, must

have been several degrees below meagre. More than once he complained that he could never keep a dollar.

Naturally, then, he was on the lookout for chances to increase his pay or to make certain the receipt of what was due him. I do not know when he discovered that I had a voice which his congregation would love to hear. But his salary was so inadequate for a family of nine that he let no innovation escape his attention which held the possibility of increasing attendance at services and thus augmenting the offering. My father's real piety, genuine integrity and devotion to Methodism certainly obscured, transformed or hallowed any such motive.

Consciously, I am sure, he never recognized the exploitation of his seventh son for so sordid a purpose. In his own mind the purpose was doubtless sublimated. He probably looked upon my singing as a gracious gift from God to be used for the salvation of souls. And since I could not, by reason of my immaturity, direct this precious gift into channels ministering to the glory of God and His Kingdom, it became his sacred duty under divine guidance to do so. The parable of the talents must have helped him to some such rationalization.

In any event, I found myself as a child of six, still dressed in jacket and skirt, standing beside a big man at an old-fashioned parlor reed organ, dutifully practicing the tunes he chose. The "professor" would sing the melody over with me several times, then play it in the treble and improvise an accompaniment in the bass as I sang, and finally he would abandon me to my own capabilities, supporting me only by a full accompaniment in which the melody was only faintly suggested. I cannot say that I was timid about this. In fact, I enjoyed it. That is, I enjoyed all but the

to me limitless and unnecessary repetitions, for I caught the melody long before my teacher believed I knew it. And when the "professor", who was also choir director in my father's church, would drop out and let me sing alone, while the organ wheezed along in thin *arpeggios* or anemic chords, no Caruso ever felt more the master of himself and his song than did this piping six-year-old.

My first appearance occurred one night when a non-religious or semi-religious celebration took place in the church. The large auditorium of a fine old Washington edifice was filled. There were speeches by local celebrities, solos and choruses. My turn came. I was prouder than Lucifer, for on this occasion—as otherwise only on Sundays and at "company" times—homely jacket and skirt had been discarded for dress-up attire of white jacket and dark pants.

And when I came on to the rostrum there was at first a hush, then whisperings, which I now know concerned "our pastor's little son," and then the "professor" began the introduction—and this time on a big piano, wide in front and narrow behind, which sat on three legs and had a big lid propped up on a stick! I sang. The words came out of my mouth of their own accord. Here is the refrain:

They're after me, they're after me,
To capture me is every one's desire;
They're after me, they're after me,
I'm the individual they require.

The tune likewise must have sung itself. I do not now recall what the song told about. I performed not like a trained singer but like a trained seal. I was hardly conscious that I was singing, so that when the audience clapped their hands with delight when I had finished, I was startled almost to tears. But when the entertainment was over, I became a child wonder.

Ladies smothered me with kisses and reached excitedly to lift me in their arms, men smiled at me, and little boys and girls of my own age squeezed through the crowd to stare silently and apparently with awe at a great marvel. And I basked in all this adulation like a sleek cat purringly content in the sun.

That was my début as a boy soprano. It had dire consequences. First, it spurred doting female members of my father's church to ask me on every possible occasion to come to their homes. They had me sing, then plied me with cake, sweets, pennies, kisses and flattery. As my father had an iron-clad rule that his children were never under any circumstances to visit the members of his congregation without parental supervision, and as the temptations placed in my way by the good women were found by experience to be too delightful to renounce, I developed at once into a first-class liar in order to escape the rod of my father's righteous wrath. Here is a case. I had made one of those forbidden visits and was being questioned by my father.

"Weren't you at Mrs. Smith's house Thursday?"

"No sir,"—half tearfully.

"Mrs. Smith told me this morning at church that you were there. She said she spent a lovely time with you," etc. . . . , going over the usual facts, my singing, eating and so on.

"No, sir, it couldn't be." More tears. "She must have meant some other little boy who looks like me. Where does Mrs. Smith live?"

My father gave the address, described the lady and her home.

"Well, Pop, I never have been on that street, and, besides, I don't know the Mrs. Smith you are talking about."

I did not get the thrashing. The child

with the gracious gift from Heaven convinced the strict father that he was innocent. I don't know what opinion of Mrs. Smith my father thereafter entertained. Nor did I suffer any remorse even though Mrs. Smith was unusually liberal with both goodies and pennies.

Here is another case. It is Christmas morning in Baltimore. A brother, my immediate senior, joins me in an excursion among the church members, knowing that we will reap a harvest of cake and candy, fruit and nuts. We thoroughly understand the risk we are running by thus flouting parental authority. At one house a lady offers us each a tumblerful of a creamy liquid which we drink with happy surprise, never having tasted anything so good before in all our young lives. We start homeward down one of the hilly streets of the city. Suddenly the declivity reverses itself, downhill becomes uphill, and with seismic abruptness the earth heaves and hits us in the face. When we recover, we are lying among leaves and dirt before a door at the foot of stairs in one of the many areaways that then existed under the front entrances of houses in the Free City. I do not recall what was the immediate aftermath of this experience. As no whipping registers in my memory, we must have lied valiantly and effectively. But to this day the sight and smell of eggnog prevent me from tasting it.

A three-year period of more or less frequent public appearances followed that first night. I was launched upon the career of a boy soprano. At all church entertainments where there were paid admissions I sang. All Sunday-school concerts programmed me. Rarely, however, did I sing at Sunday services, for these were conducted with such solemn decorum that the participation of a child

prodigy like myself, even though a recognized beneficiary of a heavenly dispensation, must have been considered quite out of place in the stately ceremonies of the Lord's day.

Instead, I was assigned with the younger group of brothers to the second pew from the chancel. This, like all the other pews, was a hard, uncushioned, wooden bench, with a high, hard back. Our legs were too short to reach the floor and hence they dangled when we sat forward as we kicked them back and forth to keep them from going to sleep, or we would stick them straight out stiffly in front of us when our backs rested against the pew.

But we reduced our almost ungovernable bodily twistings to a minimum, for my mother sat at the aisle end of this pew, and my father, while preaching, somehow managed mysteriously to mark every wiggle our restless little bodies made. Though I might be the precocious youngster adoring women after every service assured him I was, if I misbehaved in church, I would receive an early Monday morning visit from my father who, with strap in hand, ended the horrible period of painful anticipation I had endured since I caught that queer accusing look in his eyes the day before, while he stood in the pulpit. In spite of the gift God had given me, family discipline never relaxed, though Sunday derelictions were never corrected on that day.

In my tenth year some of my father's friends persuaded President Harrison to appoint him chaplain in the Army. The family moved to a Montana frontier post. There was now no necessity for building up crowds with my voice, for Uncle Sam's pay check was regular and certain. But the soldiers had souls to save, and having once heard me sing, more seemed de-

manded if they were to be won for the Kingdom. I was put in the post choir, all others being adults—officers, enlisted men, their wives, etc. I sang solos. I sang duets with women and duets with men. I was in quartettes and choruses, but always singing "sacred" music, or at least never descending in public below the somewhat rarefied atmosphere of the sentimental home ballads of the "Love's-Old-Sweet-Song" type.

Beyond the range of parental earshot I frequently amused myself and other low-minded urchins with some of the scurrilous airs which soldiers brought home from the local bawdy house, and which celebrated in crisp, frank terms, the delights and charms of parts of the female body which so saintly a child as I had no business knowing anything about. Had my father but known that I was so depraved, no ingenuity in mendacity could have saved me. My mission was sacred. In oratorios a place was always found for me, but in minstrels, comic operas and lighter secular entertainments, which were common in this Army post, I never appeared.

My mother died soon after we migrated to the West, and for a while my father was so stunned by this visitation of Divine Providence—she had returned from the East only a few months before, where she had worn herself out nursing at the deathbed of my oldest brother—that my singing was temporarily overlooked. But when he took a new wife, who was highly musical, a proficient organist and choir director, well educated and with fine teaching ability, I was taken in hand with vigor.

She was captivated by my voice. Arias from difficult operas, Ave Marias from the masses of masters, works that required expert handling of the voice, were set before me. My stepmother, being of the

practice-makes-perfect school, drilled me until my every public appearance brought her gratifying applause and commendation. I now sang wonderful old love songs, famous classical ballads, lightly humorous selections, dramatic pieces and recitatives, in addition to solos from masses and oratorios, and hymns set to famous operatic tunes.

At first I took great pleasure in this enlarged repertory. I liked music. My stepmother introduced me to a new realm of it. I was entranced with its beauties. But I was reaching puberty, and gradually it dawned on me that there was something incongruous, something not altogether worthy, something perhaps degrading in a gangling boy singing like a woman. My voice had not changed. Indeed, I could sustain an upper A long after pride-engendering outward indications told me of my rapidly maturing physical state, and had not three things occurred, I doubt that I would ever have revolted against the régime that was made for me until slackening vocal cords ended it forever.

One was that I discovered that my wishes were never consulted. I *had* to sing. That was my duty. Whether I felt like it or not, whether I liked the tune or not, whether I felt physically equal to the sometimes terrible exertion or not, I *sang*. It was God's graciousness that gave me the voice, and it would be sin to hide this talent under a bushel. I tried to assert myself a few times, firmly resolving to resist all efforts to make me sing. I recall one instance particularly. It was a "sacred" concert.

The programme had been arranged and announced at the Sunday services weeks in advance. My stepmother had taken me through a rigorous preparation. I was unquestionably perfect in my training. But

I was not going to sing and so declared, though why I took this stand I cannot now tell, unless it was long-pent-up rebellion against long-endured coercion. My father said: "A bird who can sing and won't sing, should be *made* to sing." And with the strap as his most eloquent persuader, I sang. But I sang with rancor and bitterness and hatred of him, and with not a little self-pity, sweet and soothing to my wounded ego. Other rebellions occurred. Hot defiance was followed by hot tears, met by hot thrashings, and resolved into sullen submission. But the bird was always made to sing.

A second thing was that my girl-singing earned for me the soubriquet of Lizzie. Soldiers, officers, playmates all soon called me Lizzie. At first this connoted nothing unpleasant. It seemed to me a nice way every one I knew had of expressing their affection for me. I looked on it then just as I now regard a family nickname I have carried all my life, and which I like to hear on the lips of my best friends. Lizzie was never applied to me offensively, nor accompanied by suggestion or gesture of derision or disgust. But later I seemed to sense something undesirable attaching to the name.

A thirteen-year-old boy called Lizzie! I bridled. I catalogued to myself, in defense and justification, all my superiorities over my associates—and they were several beside the girl voice—but to no avail. I was a boy, half-grown, whom everybody thought of as a girl. Moreover, an older friend, the hospital steward's son, showed me some amazing things in a medical book in the post hospital library and told me certain other startling facts. The name Lizzie thereafter became a stigma.

The final straw consisted of what I see now as a humorous incident, but what was then a major tragedy. Next to our

house were the quarters of a bachelor second lieutenant. He was a man idolized by all the children of the garrison. His dogs were our playfellows, and he himself took part in our romping games. Whenever he appeared he was surrounded by happy youngsters. He was a child's hero for me, and my greatest ambition was to imitate him. One day I passed his window and heard trilling and warbling in a strained falsetto, which simulated and yet burlesqued my own singing. Then I saw him through the window laughing. He probably thought he was harmlessly teasing me. But in a flash I saw my own estate.

It was something to make fun of, a matter for ridicule, a disgusting joke. A big, broad-shouldered, husky lieutenant, the kind of man I longed to be, singing like a woman and laughing through a window, was just the sight and experience I needed. I think such an emotional reaction as I had then is called a catharsis. It probably is what my father would have called conversion. I determined that I would sing no more.

And I sang no more. But it wasn't due to my resolution. Nature asserted herself for one thing. The lyric qualities of my voice disappeared in the crackling cacophony of the male adolescent. As a second thing, President McKinley and Manifest Destiny put us into war with Spain. The soldiers were sent to Cuba, and I was sent to a boarding school. Although my step-mother was certain that I would come out of the off-key period as a tenor of unusual quality and range, who would bring great prestige to the family, and urged me to join all singing groups at school, I never went near them. I didn't want it even guessed that I ever sang. I kept away from music and everything musical. And when, while still at this school, I came into

contact with a man of great musical talent who was a most unpleasant and even disgusting fellow, I resolved to avoid music at all costs.

The reaction carried me into a false attitude toward music, for although I am still secretly fond of it, I am half-apologetic about it publicly. At a concert a brilliantly executed orchestral composition, or a beautifully sung song may stir me to the depths, but I will not or cannot applaud to a degree which is in consonance with what I feel. The languorously dulcet notes of the 'cello, the rich and deep tones of a contralto may awake echoing harmonies within me, but I would never confess it. I have been a boy soprano.

SCORES

FIRESIDE FABLES. *Voice & Piano*
By Volly Pitman (verse) & Raymond Earle Mitchell.
Harry G. Neville
\$1 9 x 12; 23 pp. Los Angeles

There are twenty simple songs in all, six of them dramatized—that is, with suggestions for a minimum of accompanying gestures and costumes. Many are pleasant enough for the purpose, although there is nothing outstanding in the way of musical entertainment. Some might be inclined to think that here and there the melodic line was not sufficiently diatonic. Kindergarten children—these are subtitled “little songs for little people”—are too apt to founder upon chromatics.

THREE TRADITIONAL SPIRITUALS.
Male Voices

Arranged by Albert Stoessel.
C. C. Birchard & Company
25 cents 7 3/4 x 10 3/4; 11 pp. Boston

The Stoessel Series includes the classic composers and folk music. The spirituals are “Steal Away”, “Religion Is A Fortune” and “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot”. Of these, the middle one is not very familiar, but it cannot stand comparison with its two companions. The arrangements are musical and interesting.

P E D A G O G Y

MUSIC IN THE HOME, *Before Lessons Begin.*

By *Geraldine L. Aitken.* *Carl Fischer*
\$1 7 x 10 $\frac{1}{8}$; 59 pp. *New York*

This aspires to be an "outline of simple and natural experiences in music, for mothers and teachers of very young children". Paraphrasing Mark Twain's dictum about our Navy and the water we have, one might say that there's no reason why our children shouldn't grow up into virtuosos; look at the teachers and instruction books we possess. For one thing, instruction is being made far more pleasant than it was a quarter of a century ago. We have learned much about child psychology, and are applying it. The sanctimoniousness of Miss Seymour's introduction is not necessary. The book is attractive, very helpful, and self-sufficient.

ESSENTIALS IN SIGHT SINGING.

By *Nicola A. Montani.*
C. C. Birchard & Company
\$4 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 10 $\frac{1}{2}$; 2 vols.; 170 + 204 pp.
Boston

The first volume is devoted to fundamentals; the second, to the art of ensemble or *a cappella* singing. There is a multiplicity of musical illustration; the instructional element is pithy, to the point. There are special chapters on the various forms (rounds, catches, canons, and so on), on the Russian Homophonic School, the English Madrigal School, on the various intervals, as well as exercises in whole-tone scales. In all, a thorough and highly competent job, with no singing-teacher nonsense, fully living up to its sub-title, "A Modern Method of Solfeggio". It is strongly recommended to both schools and choral societies.

THE LITTLE SINGER'S SONG BOOK.

Voice & Piano
By *Angela Cramsie Wiechard.*
C. C. Birchard & Company
75 cents 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 10 $\frac{3}{4}$; 37 pp. *Boston*

A book for kindergarten and pre-school work, this provides, among other things, help to mothers who of themselves are not very resourceful in mingling instruction

with the musical entertainment of their tots. The words, besides being exceedingly simple, are such as should appeal to emergent minds; they have their very practical uses, too, as in the ditty "Walking Through Town": "When my little sister goes walking with me, We're ever so careful at crossings, you see . . ."

"AIR JINGLES."

By *Nellie M. Johnson*
Published by the Author
\$1 9 x 12; 32 pp. *Muscatine, Iowa*

A radio course, together with a manual of exercises for the teacher, for those who would initiate the child into music. The material, of the simplest, needs the cajoling sympathy of the instructor. There are illustrations by Mary K. Throop.

B O O K

THE LETTERS OF RICHARD WAGNER TO ANTON PUSINELLI.

Edited by *Elbert Lenrow.* *Alfred A. Knopf*
\$5 9 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 6 $\frac{1}{8}$; 293 pp. *New York*

Pusinelli was a physician in Dresden, and two years younger than Wagner. They went to the same school as boys, but did not meet until 1842, when Wagner was twenty-nine years old. But thereafter they were in affectionate contact until Pusinelli's death in 1878. During that time Wagner sent his friend eighty-four letters, postcards and telegrams, all of which were carefully preserved by their recipient. In 1900 this correspondence was submitted to Breitkopf & Härtel by Pusinelli's son, and accepted for publication, but Cosima Wagner refused to give her consent, and so only seventeen of the letters got into print in Germany, and most of them were considerably edited. In 1929 the originals were sold to an American, and now Mr. Lenrow prints them in full for the first time—of course in English translation. They throw a great deal of new light upon Wagner's life and work. His first marriage and his ensuing troubles are discussed at length, and there are notes upon every one of his music dramas save "Parsifal". Mr. Lenrow provides a good introduction and a useful commentary, and at the end there is an adequate index.

THE LIBRARY

BY H. L. MENCKEN

Hoover as Archangel

THE TRUTH ABOUT HOOVER, by
Herbert Corey. \$2.50. 8 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 5 $\frac{3}{8}$; 318 pp.
Boston: *The Houghton Mifflin Company*

MR. COREY, in this florid book, operates with two weapons. The first is a knout of red-hot barbed wire, with a live scorpion affixed to every barb. The second is a huge squirt full of mixed animal and vegetable oils at body heat, perfumed richly with Jockey Club, new-mown hay and mignonne. The knout is applied furiously to all those who condemn Lord Hoover, and especially to the authors of the anti-Hoover books which now pass from hand to hand throughout the realm. The squirt is aimed solely at Hoover himself. No President within my recollection, not even the incomparable Woodrow, has ever got so gaudy an anointing. Whoosh!—and a veritable geyser of unguents floods the right hon. gentleman from stem to stem, causing him to glitter in the sunlight like a Christmas tree. Wow!—and a great Jack Johnson of myrrh and frankincense fetches him in the façade. Zoom, boom, ah!—and he is drowned and embalmed beneath a cataract of glycerides, each of a clinging viscosity and ravishing scent.

“The truth about Hoover”, as Mr. Corey sees it, is simply that the world has never witnessed a sweller fellow, or a nobler. His life from infancy has been one long tale of Service. He went out to Australia as a young engineer to purge the mine-fields of oppression and false pretenses, he proceeded to China to save the poor Chinese from the rapacity of the great

Powers, he moved to England to clean up the mine-stock business there, and then, having accumulated a competence in spite of his altruism, he proceeded to Belgium to feed and succor the Belgians in the face of bitter opposition from the Germans, the Allies and themselves. Finally, having made a name as a philanthropist in two continents, he returned to his native U.S.A., and was presently reorganizing American business, relieving the victims of flood and drought, reforming and denaturizing the Republican party, and laying elaborate plans to meet the Depression when it should come, and to lead us all into the flowery pastures of a grander and more durable prosperity.

The story listens well, but it ill bears destructive criticism. Mr. Corey, indeed, is so bewitched by the heady emanations of his own roses and magnolias that he plainly boggles his facts, and even his dates. On one page, for example, he says that Lord Hoover was elected in 1928 because everyone was looking for inspired “leadership in the emergency” and “it was felt that if he could not stem the flood of disaster, no one could,” and yet on another and adjacent page it is noted naïvely that the Depression actually did not come on until “six months after he took his seat as President.” Obviously, there is something wrong here. Was there actually any general feeling, at the time of Hoover’s election, that a collapse was imminent? If so, I can find no trace of it in the record. All the university economists and Wall Street wisecracks were telling us loudly that good times were here to stay, and nothing

to the contrary was heard on the stump or printed in the newspapers. The chief argument for Hoover, in fact—aside from the master argument that Al Smith was an agent of the Pope—was to the effect that he (Hoover) knew how to keep prosperity going, and would do so if elected.

Mr. Corey now tells us that he really knew, all the while, what was ahead. His powerful mind, searching the future, was disquieted, and he summoned various mysterious gentlemen to Washington to warn them. Who these gentlemen were is not stated, but they appear to have been of the higher income-tax brackets. Hoover "talked to them straight from the shoulder, not once but many times." Unfortunately, the Washington correspondents were not admitted to these conferences, and the public thus heard nothing about them. What it got from Hoover was simply a long string of rosy assurances. He kept on preaching optimism even after the panic of November, 1929; indeed, he was still full of it so recently as a year ago. What are we to think of a President who, knowing the facts about a public and important matter, reserves them for a chosen few, and lets the rest of the people plunge on idiotically to disaster?

I refuse to believe that Mr. Hoover was as clairvoyant as Mr. Corey makes him out. It is much more probable that he was deceived along with the economists, the Wall Street necromancers, and the newspaper editorial writers, and that the Depression, when it came down in full fury, surprised him quite as much as it appalled him. There is nothing in his record as President to show any unusual foresight. He has staggered along in a very stupid manner, colliding full tilt with all sorts of avoidable difficulties. Worse, he has always revealed a plentiful lack of resource and resolution. No more timorous and ineffec-

tive President has ever been in the White House; even the clam, Coolidge, was no worse. He seems quite incapable of bold and persuasive leadership. He has made a mess of his whole programme, and on the salient issue of Prohibition his disingenuous skulking long disgraced both his office and himself. If, during the past few months, he has gained something in public esteem, it is only because he has been confronted by an Opposition of the most incompetent and dishonest political hacks ever heard of.

Mr. Corey devotes a large part of his book to defending his hero's record as a promoter of mine stocks. This record, as everyone knows, has been attacked with great vigor in a number of recent volumes. Mr. Corey lumps them all together as inspired by private grievances, and denounces their statements of fact as false and libellous. It must be said for him that, in a few instances, he brings forward plausible evidence in support of his position, but it cannot be added that he bleaches the Hoover skirts to a really pure white. In particular, he overlooks a number of documents set forth at length by Walter W. Liggett in "The Rise of Herbert Hoover", especially those relating to the Chinese Engineering & Mining Company case. But here it may be well to let him have his way, for Mr. Hoover's doings as a young man in China and Australia have little bearing upon his present operations as President of the United States. Grover Cleveland, though he was a ward politician in his youth, with a lamentable libido for malt liquor, yet made a very good President. Mr. Hoover, even though we grant that he went to China in the altruistic spirit of a Jesuit missionary, has made an extraordinarily bad one.

It is unfortunate that no really fair and

dispassionate account of his career has ever appeared. He has had an interesting life, and it deserves to be described at length, without any bias either way. Mr. Liggett's book reveals some approach to a judicial spirit, and is by no means the mass of slander that Mr. Corey says it is; nevertheless, it is plainly the work of one who dislikes Hoover. The books of Hamill, Wood and company are extravagant tirades of abuse, and those of Irwin, Train, Hard and Miss Lane are only goose-grease. The job is one that cries aloud for the industry and impartiality of Henry F. Pringle. He managed to do Roosevelt without writing either a pæan or a philippic, and I believe that he could do Hoover quite as well. Certainly the country ought to know more about the man who, at this writing, seems doomed to sweat and pant in the White House for four years more. Few characters in American history have got so much publicity, and yet few remain more mysterious.

Nonsense as Science

WILD TALENTS, by Charles Fort. \$3.
8 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 5 $\frac{3}{4}$; 343 pp. New York: *Claude Kendall*

THE vogue of the late Mr. Fort (he had the misfortune to die a few months ago) will undoubtedly get him his page or two from the future historian of American credulity. He seems to have specialized in fetching literati, and when he reached the common goal of all of us his obsequies were conducted by an eminent novelist. The speeches made upon the occasion were not reported in full in the press, but no doubt they depicted the deceased as a very acute fellow, and an effective agent of the Only True Truth. His method of attaining it was twofold. First he derided as false all of the facts amassed by the ordi-

nary methods of the laboratory, and second he set up in place of them a mass of marvels borrowed from such scientific sources as the Sunday supplements of the Hearst papers, the London *News of the World*, Dr. Hostetter's Family Almanac, and the current literature of the spiritualists, theosophists and Seventh Day Adventists. This material, in the course of twelve years, he arranged in four volumes, the last of which, now under review, appeared shortly before his death. The others were entitled "Lo!", "New Lands", and "The Book of the Damned."

His scheme of operation was somewhat subtle, and showed no little humor. He seldom denied overt evidences in an overt manner, and he seldom argued flatly that his own creepy surmises had any objective validity. Instead, he simply set forth the former in as suspicious a manner as possible, and then let the latter work their wicked will upon his customers. The process is well displayed in Chapter VIII of "Wild Talents". He begins by recounting several more or less proved cases of the perversion called vampirism, which causes its votaries to suck the blood of their victims. Then he proceeds to a mocking account of the kissing-bug craze of 1899, and shows on the testimony of Dr. L. O. Howard that there were but "six insects in the United States that could inflict dangerous bites or punctures, and all of them were of uncommon occurrence." Then he turns to the hypodermic-needle uproar of 1912 and 1913, with its palpably incredible tales of old maids beset by white slavers in dark movie parlors. Then he returns quietly to his vampires, and lets the necessary inference sink in. It is that vampires are not only common, but also able to make themselves invisible—that they glutted themselves upon children playing in the streets in the days when kissing-bugs

were blamed, and upon virgins in film houses in the era of white slavery. There is no argument. The kissing-bugs and needle-men are simply played down delicately, and the vampires played up.

Every other chapter in the four books is pretty much of a piece with this Chapter VIII. In one of them various mysterious fires are described, and there is a vague and inconclusive discussion of "fire-geniuses", who are depicted as atavistic reversions to a type common in the early days of man, when there were no matches, and persons who had "vestigial organs and structures" capable of making fire were "valuable members of a savage community." In another there is an account of the appearance of several wild animals of unknown species in the woods near Mineola, L. I., and it is followed by an equally vague discourse upon werewolves. In a third a series of banal stories of people who have suddenly disappeared, leaving no trace, is coupled with an even more banal dissertation upon "long-distance death-rays that are not electro-magnetic". And so on, and so on. The materials are copious, and readily at hand. The more sensational newspapers supply the data, and the explanations are furnished by the works of Sir Oliver Lodge, the Rev. Dr. Montague Summers, and the author of "Aunt Jemimah's Dream-Book". There is even a chapter on the Keely perpetual motion machine of fifty years ago, closing with a hint that Keely may have "operated his motor by a development of mere willing or visualizing, whether consciously or not knowing how he got his effects, succeeding spasmodically sometimes, failing often, according to the experience of all pioneers."

The remarkable thing about all this highfalutin balderdash is not that a quack with his tongue in his cheek should set it down solemnly in four volumes, but that

it should be reviewed with all gravity in a presumably civilized country, and accepted as gospel by a considerable body of presumably sane men. It offers melancholy evidence that the human race has still a long way to go before it will deserve to be called rational. There is in all of us a congenital and almost unconquerable resistance to fact, and in not a few of us it takes the form of an eager acceptance of non-fact. A really sound idea has a truly dreadful time of it in this world. Nine-tenths of all human beings reject it instinctively, and most of the rest make elaborate efforts to dilute and debase it. If it is something new in physics, then it must be mauled until it fits into one of the musty pigeon-holes of the theologians. If it has to do with medicine, then it collides horribly with the accumulated wisdom of ten thousand generations of old wives. And if it has to do with the operations of the human mind, then it turns out that the human mind resents bitterly any prying into its operations, and refuses to admit whatever is not flattering to it. Long ago, in a moment of depression, I defined the truth as something somehow discreditable to someone. But that did not go far enough. The general feeling of the race seems to be that the truth is discreditable to all of us, and not only discreditable, but also extremely dangerous. The easiest way to get a reputation as a misanthrope is to say something that is palpably and indubitably true.

Along with this aversion from fact goes a curious affection for its opposite. Every science is accompanied by a grotesque *Doppelgänger*, an obscene and scandalous ghost. Hardly had the New Physics reached the first page of the New York *Times* before it began to sprout a New Theology, with a mathematical God compounded of straight curves and curved

straight lines. Medicine, since the earliest days, has been hemmed in and devoured by a whole horde of such monsters, and even today, in the very shadow of the Harvard Medical School, it is beset by a dozen of them—Christian Science, osteopathy, homeopathy, chiropractic, and so on. Even theology has not escaped, for on the one side it is tailed by the *reductio ad absurdum* of spiritualism, and on the other by such bogus revelations as the New Thought. Most of these cults are relatively small, but in the aggregate they must account for a very large proportion of the race. The medical quackeries alone have enormous followings, and some time ago a writer in one of the women's magazines estimated that fully 20,000,000 Americans, when they come down with chills and fever, bar out the regular doctors, or resurrection men, and send for magicians.

In June, writing in this place, I permitted myself certain observations upon the credulity which induces certain American *littérateurs*, chiefly of the more footling and bewildered sort, to embrace

the imbecilities of Communism. One of the things I remarked was the protean quality of that credulity. It is never satisfied with one kind of nonsense: it invariably leaps from one to another, and then to a third, and so on to an *n*th. Thus it does not surprise me to hear that some of the customers of Communism are also customers of Mr. Fort. He had on his shelves the precise goods that they crave, and if he had lived longer he would have got the patronage of many more of them. He was apparently headed, indeed, for a grand synthesis of all the current quackeries, with the addition of some novelties of his own. He knew how to make even the most extravagant nonsense palatable to believing minds, and he was clever enough to get into his statement of them a specious appearance of enlightened and even of scientific skepticism. Thus he flattered his natural clients while he bagged them. It is a pity that he had to die before his great labor was completed. There was in him more than one hint of the special talent of St. Thomas Aquinas.

THE AMERICAN MERCURY AUTHORS

RANDOLPH BARTLETT *was born and educated in Canada, and his first writing was for Winnipeg newspapers. He became a naturalized American at a time when nobody could foresee Prohibition. After newspaper work in California he began a literary career. He is now living in Paris.*

HOWARD F. BIGELOW *was born at Kalamazoo, Mich., and educated at Wesleyan University and Harvard. He taught in the College of Agriculture at Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, for a year, and is now in the department of economics of Western State Teachers College, Kalamazoo.*

HUGH BRADLEY *was educated at Washington College and the University of Maryland Law School, but instead of becoming a lawyer, he joined a newspaper staff. He remained in newspaper work until a year ago, and since then has been free-lancing.*

BOB BROWN *is an American journalist who, until recently, spent most of his time abroad. He is now living in New York.*

HOLGER CAHILL *was born in 1893 and educated in the United States and Canada, specializing in æsthetics at Columbia University and the New School for Social Research, New York. He is the author of a novel, "Profane Earth" (1927), and a biography, "A Yankee Adventurer" (1930). He has written two monographs on American artists, "Pop Hart" (1929), and "Max Weber" (1930).*

JACK CONROY *was born in Moberly, Mo., in 1899, and has worked as a railroad hand, carpenter, ditch digger, and newspaper man.*

W. A. S. DOUGLAS *is the Chicago correspondent of the Baltimore Sun.*

JOHN FANTE *was born in Denver and was educated at the Catholic school in Boulder and at Regis College, a Jesuit in-*

stitution, in his native city. He began studies for the priesthood, but discovering no vocation, abandoned them. He is now living at Long Beach, Calif.

IDWAL JONES *is a newspaper man, now on the staff of the New York American. He is the author of "Steel Chips."*

JOHN MCCLURE *was formerly one of the editors of the Double Dealer in New Orleans.*

LOUISE OWEN (MRS. HAROLD HOLMES OWEN) *was born at Concord, N. H., and educated at Smith College. She is the author of "Virtuosa," a book of verse, published in 1930 in the Yale Series of Younger Poets.*

O. F. PEALE *was, until recently, a teacher in an institution for deaf mutes. He was born in Canada and is now living in New York.*

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS STEWARD *is the subject of an Editorial note in this issue.*

WALTER A. TERPENNING, PH.D. (Michigan), *was brought up on a Michigan farm. He spent a year in Russia in 1918-19, and since then has given a good part of his time to the study of European village life, especially in England, Germany and France. He was professor of sociology and economics at Evansville College from 1921 to 1922, and since 1923 has been professor of sociology at Western State Teachers College, Kalamazoo, Mich. He is the author of "Village and Open-Country Neighborhoods," reviewed in The Library in January last.*

JOHN VAN ZANT *is a graduate of the University of Chicago, and is now a newspaper man in Chicago.*

LOU WYLIE *was born in Kentucky, and was educated at the State College for Women. She is now living in Brooklyn, N. Y.*

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Check List of NEW BOOKS

Continued from front advertising section,
page vi

wilds of Nicaragua, and with his conversation with him. He found Sandino a very intelligent and apparently incorruptible man, capable of inspiring the utmost loyalty in his soldiers. "His utterance was remarkably fluid, precise, evenly modulated. . . . His ideas are precisely, epigrammatically ordered. . . . In military matters, however, he was quite too flamboyant and boastful, and exaggerated his successes." The acts of brutality that have been ascribed to him are probably all fabrications. There are many fine illustrations by Carlos Mérida, the Guatemalan artist, and also an index.

CHALLENGE TO DEFEAT. *Modern Man in Goethe's World and Spengler's Century.*
By William Harlan Hale.

Harcourt, Brace & Company
\$2.50 8 3/4 x 5 3/4; 209 pp. New York

Mr. Hale, who was graduated from Yale in 1931 and is now twenty-one years old, begins with a detailed examination of Goethe's "Faust" and of Spengler's "Decline of the West," and then attempts to formulate a "healthy" philosophy of life for the young men and women of 1932. Goethe, he says, was the great yea-sayer of the modern world, and Spengler is its great nay-sayer. "It is up to us to meet the challenge of Spengler." To do so, it appears, is really an easy matter. The pessimism of science involves "a false approach to the modern world. . . . a stale confusion between life and mechanism." Science "has no choice now" but to recognize "the truth that . . . spirit dominates matter." But there is an even better reason for not succumbing to the current philosophies of despair. We can all see that "a human strength arises, a passion for preservation and life, unequalled in our past." Altogether, "Western man seems no nearer his death-agony now than each man has been sometime in the middle of his striving." There will be a resurrection of the spirit of man, and America will be its "logical and necessary leader." There is an index.

SOCIOLOGY

HARLAN MINERS SPEAK. *Terrorism in the Kentucky Coal Fields.*

Harcourt, Brace & Company
\$2 8 1/4 x 5 3/4; 348 pp. New York

In the late Winter of 1931 eight members of the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners made an investigating tour of the Kentucky coal fields. The leader of the group was Theodore Dreiser, and his associates were John Dos

Continued on page xii

Editorial NOTE

MR. GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS STEWARD, author of "Boy Soprano" in this issue, was born in Wilmington, Del., in 1881. He sends in the following autobiographical notes:

My education began in the public schools and ended in the Oberlin Graduate School of Theology. Perhaps the fact that as a graduate theologian I was offered at once a chaplaincy in a missionary school at \$30 a month frightened me away from clerical vows. Perhaps, too, it was because my father had earlier spiked my adolescent ambition to be a missionary, an ambition fired by my proximity in classrooms to a gentle girl from a far-away heathen land, whose luscious contralto singing transported me, and whose eloquent appeals for "light" on behalf of her countrymen left me quivering with desire to do something to help them.

Home on leave from his regiment, then stationed in the Philippines, my father appeared at college commencement, having been warned by my stepmother that I was planning to accompany my evangelical mentor to her native home, and took me with him when he returned. A conference he had in Manila with the superintendent of education resulted in my appointment as a government teacher, and soon I was located in a little Zambales town.

My father had a middle-age ambition that at least one of his sons should follow his calling—the ministry. His choice fell upon me. But although I completed the theological course, I spiked his ambition, just as he had done mine, by continuing in the teaching profession to which he had introduced me. After ten years in school rooms and school offices, I finally descended—after a hectic experience in an abortive attempt to be an uplifter—to the level of a desk slave. There I abide.

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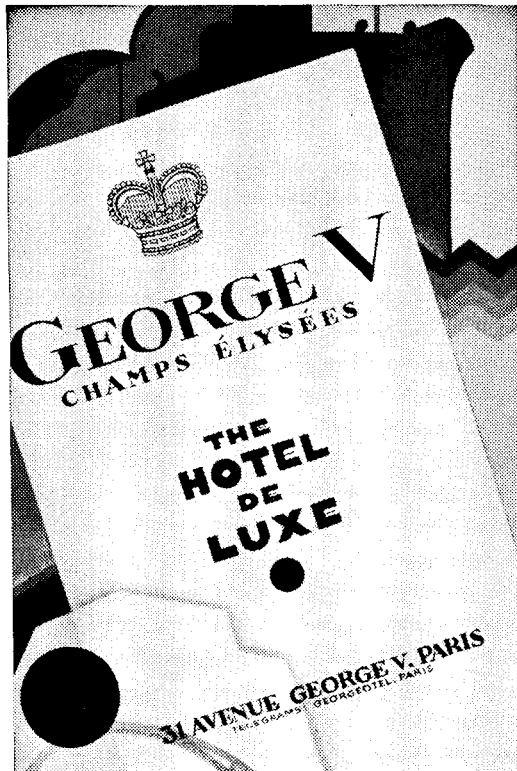
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CHECK LIST OF NEW BOOKS

Continued from page x

Passos, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Rumford Walker, Bruce Crawford, Samuel Ornitz, Lester Cohen, and Melvin P. Levy. All of them were indicted for criminal syndicalism by the local grand jury. The present volume begins with brief chapters by various members of the committee, dealing with special problems of the area covered. Then come stenographic reports of testimony given by miners and the wives of miners, followed by the testimony of Sheriff J. H. Blair and of Prosecuting Attorney William E. Brock of Harlan county. At the end of the book is reprinted part of the evidence presented by Waldo Frank and his committee (they made a later tour of the same coal fields) before United States Senators Costigan, Cutting, and Logan in Washington on February 14. Altogether, the book makes melancholy reading. It is worth 1000 treatises by professional economists.

THE TAXI DANCE-HALL.

By Paul G. Cressey.

The University of Chicago Press
\$3 7½ x 5¼; 300 pp. *Chicago*

A taxi dance-hall is one to which only men patrons are admitted. Their female partners are all young women on the staff of the establishment. The patron pays so much a dance, usually ten cents, and the money is divided between his partner and the management. A lively girl can make \$30 or \$40 a week in such a place. Mr. Cressey here presents the results of an investigation made in Chicago, where there are many taxi halls. He finds that the great majority of the girls tend to go downhill. They come, in the main, from very inferior homes, and so their introduction to the dance-hall seems a step upward, but very soon they turn the other way, and many end in squalid prostitution. The study belongs to the University of Chicago Sociological Series, and is carefully done. The volume is well documented and has an index.

FICTION

LETTER FROM AN UNKNOWN WOMAN.

By Stefan Zweig.

The Viking Press

\$1.25 7½ x 4¾; 111 pp. *New York*

Upon his return to Vienna, after a brief holiday, R., a famous novelist, finds a bulky letter addressed to him in a strange handwriting. "To you, who have never known me," he reads. "My boy died yesterday . . . I cannot stay alone with my dead child without pouring my heart out to some one; and to

whom should I do that in this dreadful hour if not to you, who have been and still are all in all to me?" The woman author of the letter, it appears, has loved R. from childhood—she lived across the hall in a neighboring apartment then—; afterward, when she is grown, he picks her up on the street and spends three nights with her without recognizing her. She has a child by him, but then passes out of his life rather than become a burden to him, for she sees his spendthrift affections as "wholly concentrated in their own expression." She supports her son by prostitution, and always on the novelist's birthday sends him a bunch of roses, like the roses he gave her after their first night of love. She meets him once, years after their son is born, and again he fails to recognize her. Her letter to him, which arrives on his birthday, informs him that it will be delivered only in the event of her death. In the end she asks ironically, "Always on your birthday—a day when one thinks of oneself—get some roses and put them in the vase. Do it just as others, once a year, have a Mass said for the beloved dead. . . . My first request, and my last. . . . Thanks, thanks. . . . I love you, I love you. . . . Farewell. . . ." The translation is by Eden and Cedar Paul.

TAXI HEAVEN.

By Pat O'Mara.

The Vanguard Press

\$2 7½ x 5; 293 pp. *New York*

Mr. O'Mara has created some real characters in this tale of the underworld. There are G. T. Powers, president of the Blue & White Taxicab Company, a hypocrite who preaches the gospel of Service to his drivers; Morry Jackson, formerly with the Blue & White, but now head of the Kimona Kab Kompany, a slick customer who operates his fleet of broken-down cabs on a shoe-string; Miss Hammenden, his hard-boiled factotum, her nose always buried in *Racing Form*; "Preacher" Hortense, the fanatical starter of cabs for the Blue & White at a big hotel; Pat O'Mara himself, operator of cab No. 305 for the Blue & White, a sentimental Irishman who tells the story, and seldom misses a trick in his day's run; Dick Gardner, his partner, who fights his way clear to marry Croquette, a trashy but indomitable little chauffeur; Sally Romano, a slimy king of the underworld; Fanny Malone, a beautiful harlot who chisels her way to the top of her profession; above all, Queenie Murphy, really the heroine of the piece, —an old madame with varicose veins and a tarnished bob, who struggles furiously to keep her house from the clutches of the ambitious Fanny. An amusing and excellent first novel.

*Concerning "The Fountain"
And Some Previous Books—*

For a year or more publishers, printers, binders, and booksellers have all been worried by a serious falling off in the sale of books. I won't discuss the matter in detail here—it would take altogether too long—but many publishers and booksellers have felt the public demand would be for light books, fluffy, sexy circulating library novels. One publisher has actually as I write, announced a series of "Novel Novels" designed especially to supply what he thinks the public wants. Well, I wonder if the public really does want such books?

My own belief, arrived at after much prayerful consideration, is that the public today wants *better books than ever before*. I have good reason to respect the American public's taste. Consider those Borzoi Books that have been most successful. Willa Cather's novels, Sigrid Undset's, Joseph Hergesheimer's, Knut Hamsun's "Growth of the Soil", Reymont's "The Peasants", Hudson's "Green Mansions", Spengler's "The Decline of the West", Mann's "The Magic Mountain". Not a bad list that. There are Warwick Deeping's novels too,

and "Sorrell and Son" has out-sold every novel I have published, but its sale in the original \$2.50 edition is not far ahead of "Shadows on the Rock" and it has been out much longer. There have been glorious failures too, first rate books that didn't catch on, but the failures have most often been books that were not really of the very first class. Occasionally, I confess, I have published books I'd have done better to leave to another imprint, e.g. Marquis Boni de Castellane's "How I Discovered America" and a certain novel by a young Englishman who has since scored an enormous success—but with such books I somehow always failed.

Since November when I read it in manuscript I've been more excited about Charles Morgan's "The Fountain" than about any other novel. (It is, alas, the last book by Morgan that will appear over my imprint, for in February, quite unknown to me, he signed a contract with another publisher for his future work. Like many another he had his price—in this case strangely enough, no astronomical figure—my colleague offered it and has since, I trust, paid it.) I published "The Fountain" June

THE AMERICAN MERCURY

first, with advance orders for 6,928 copies from the booksellers of United States. On the same day The Book-of-the-Month Club sent it out to about 40,000 of its members. Monday, June sixth, orders began to pour in. That week we shipped 4,439 copies. The week of June thirteenth 5,699 copies, the week of June twentieth 4,769 copies and the week of June twenty-seventh 7,123 copies. Now "The Fountain" is no light, fluffy, sexy circulating library novel. It is, in my considered opinion, just about the best novel that has been or is likely to be published this year. Still, as I write, it's the best-selling novel in America, leading by a comfortable margin all those books that were written and published to "give the public what it wants."

The public may not articulate its demands for the best; but I never cease to be astonished and delighted at the way in which it rises to the occasion when the best is offered it.



A Glorious Failure

L. A. G. Strong, one of the best of the younger English novelists and men of letters is writing a book for boys. It is to be called

"King Richard's Land" and will probably appear in the late summer of 1933. Strong is an astonishing fellow: distinguished as a poet, critic, novelist, and short story writer, he now tackles a new field. Those who read his lovely novel, "The Garden", will have little doubt of his ability to delight young readers as well as old. His "Brothers" is one of my glorious failures—a really superb novel, the American sales of which I blush to admit are only 4,133 against a British sale of five times as many. Some day "Brothers" will be discovered by the many. Meanwhile, I'd be glad to hear from any reader who thinks he can explain its failure.



A Recommendation from Sigrid Undset

Long before her books began to sell in a big way in America, Sigrid Undset's novels enjoyed an enormous vogue in Germany, where they were published by Ruetten and Loening of Frankfurt-am-Main. One evening in the summer of 1927 I was taking supper after the opera with Dr. Oswald, one of the partners of this firm. He told me that they were publishing another admir-



able Norwegian novelist, Olav Duun. He said that Duun's great six-volume novel, "The People of Juvik", had been recommended to him by Fru Undset as a work of the first importance. I immediately secured the Norwegian original and asked Arthur G. Chater, in our London office, to read it and report upon it. Mr. Chater not only translates our Norwegian and Danish books, but has been almost entirely responsible for the selection of those we have published. My publishing interest in Duun was checked momentarily when I saw Harpers announce a novel by him called "The Good Conscience", for I found it difficult to understand then, as I still do, why a publisher should introduce a distinguished foreign writer with anything other than his best work. "The Good Conscience" was certainly not Duun's best, and when I discovered that his other books were free I planned to embark on the publication of the whole six volumes of "The People of Juvik".

There have so far appeared and they have sold as follows: "The Trough of the Wave" 1,063; "The Blind Man" 556; "The Big Wedding" 372. Not a very admirable record this, but I am not at all discouraged. A

writer as important as Duun will always, later if not sooner, find his audience, and with "Odin in Fairyland" (published July 8th), I believe the sale of the series will begin to pick up, for the later volumes, I am assured, are considerably more exciting than the earlier ones.

I have already published books by five Nobel Prize winners, Von Heidenstam, Hamsun, Reymont, Undset, and Mann. I suspect that one of these days Duun will make the sixth. Anyway, when I was in Denmark and Norway this past winter I was told by literally everyone to whom I mentioned Duun's name not to give him up, that he was absolutely first class and almost certain sooner or later to get the Nobel Prize for Literature. I believe he missed this distinction one year by only a single vote. Incidentally he writes in the difficult Norwegian dialect known as Landsmaal and I was amused to be told by certain quite cultivated Norwegians that they read him in English in preference to Norwegian.



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by **JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER**

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